

Expanding Trailfinders network infrastructure to support its highly successful growth

Case Study:

Connect Express expands, maintains and supports the network infrastructure that delivers the applications used by Trailfinders' highly successful travel centres



Business Challenge

Maintain and grow a highly secure, reliable and resilient network that supports the business.

Industry Sector

Travel.

Solution

A network infrastructure designed, installed and supported by Connect Express.

Business Benefits

Trailfinders' network has been able to accommodate the company's growth with no impact on business performance. There has been no need to recruit and keep scarce resource in house. Support is available almost immediately when required.

About the Customer

Founded in 1970 by former SAS officer Mike Gooley and a staff of four, Trailfinders pioneered tailor-made, worldwide travel. Today the company has 26 travel centres, a staff of over 1,100 and has made travel arrangements for over 11 million clients. Available seven days a week, Trailfinders is located throughout the UK, Ireland and Australia.

Trailfinders' success is based on offering unbeatable value and exceptional service. Its travel consultants have access to the widest range of flights, tours, hotels, cruises and car and motor home hire across the globe. Between them they have travelled to 96% of the world's countries, so the service and advice they offer is second to none.

Heart of the business

At the heart of Trailfinders' business is the network that supports its travel centres. "Our network is absolutely crucial to our business success," says Matthew Raymond, IT Director. "Through the network our consultants have access to the travel applications and reservation systems they need to advise our customers and make bookings for them. The network also supports the Microsoft Office applications they use and, increasingly, telephony. As we expand the functions available over the network, if it fails the travel centres won't be able to work. It's as simple as that."

Consultancy and expertise

The network was not quite as big in 1997, when Trailfinders started working with Connect Express. "I'd worked with the specialists at Connect Express before the company was set up and I knew they were very technically proficient," says Matthew. "So, when they started Connect Express, I asked them to support our network."

At the time Trailfinders only had a handful of travel centres around the UK. Today it has 22 and Connect Express has been instrumental in helping Trailfinders ensure the network that supports them is secure, reliable and resilient.

"The experts at Connect Express are continually keeping themselves up to date with the latest technologies," explains Matthew. "They also keep in close touch with us and our plans, so they are very good at proactively updating us on new products and services, as well as helping us to continually improve our network infrastructure to meet the changing needs of the business."



Why Connect Express

Connect Express delivers a one-stop-shop for all Trailfinders network infrastructure requirements. With Connect Express, Trailfinders can rely on one company to help it maintain and evolve its network.

“What sets Connect Express apart from other companies is the incredible flexibility and extreme commitment of its people to keeping our network up and running efficiently.”



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Implementation

Connect Express also takes care of network implementations for Trailfinders. When a new travel centre is opened, for example, Connect Express purchases, installs and configures the infrastructure that is needed to get it up and running. When Trailfinders opened a new data centre in London, Connect Express was the de facto choice to implement the network components.

“Whenever we need new equipment to be installed and configured it’s Connect Express we ask to do it,” says Matthew. “Its consultants know Cisco’s products very well and are very professional in planning and carrying out implementations. They also work very well with our in-house team.”

Extreme commitment

With the network so critical to business success, Trailfinders has built massive amounts of redundancy into it. Nevertheless, problems can and do occur and Matthew needs to know that they will be resolved quickly.

“There is no doubt that Connect Express has the technical expertise to provide the support we need,” says Matthew. “It is also helpful having the same specialists supporting the network that built it, because they understand it in detail. But what sets Connect Express apart from other companies is the incredible flexibility and extreme commitment of its people to keeping our network up and running efficiently. If we have a problem the response is almost immediate, no matter what time of the day or night we call them.”

Part of the team

In fact the relationship between Trailfinders and Connect Express is so close that Matthew thinks of them as part of the team. “The people at Connect Express are effectively acting as our network manager and, with their ‘can-do’ attitude, it works very well,” he explains. “It saves us having to recruit and keep scarce expertise in house, even if we could find someone that would cover all the eventualities they do.”

“I would recommend Connect Express to anyone,” Matthew continues. “Its specialists have helped us to ensure our network keeps pace with our business for more than fourteen years. We’ve stayed with them all that time because they take complete responsibility for ensuring we have a high performing network infrastructure. They also show total commitment to keeping it up and running reliably. As our network becomes more and more critical, that’s important to me and the business.”

