

CASE STUDY



COMPANY
Clee Hill Plant



INDUSTRY
Construction hire



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
80+



THE PROBLEM
Out-of-date IT not fit for powering strategic expansion and competitiveness



THE SOLUTION
New technologies, server upgrades virtualisation, disaster recovery and Office 365



TECHNOLOGIES APPLIED
VMWare, Veeam, Microsoft Server OS, custom disaster recovery infrastructure and Office 365



Clee Hill Plant is a leading construction plant hire specialist in Derbyshire and eight additional depots across Britain. They're the country's largest compaction and surface dressing hire company and have been servicing customers in construction, civil engineering and highways for over half a century. Following a decade of growth, Clee Hill now boasts a team of 80 and a fleet of 2,000 machines.



Clee Hill is continually developing its offering to align with evolving customer needs and expectations - prioritising modern services, high-quality equipment and reliable delivery. They've always been engaged with technology, IT and its value, so when they reached a certain size, they quickly realised that leveraging IT was essential to success.

"About three years ago, Clee Hill was entering another wave of expansion marked by an increased need for enhanced technologies", shares Michael Parker, IT Manager at Clee Hill. "Unless we made changes, we'd be at risk of IT being unable to support our customers and therefore really damage our competitiveness".

"Moving from physical servers to a virtualised environment has allowed Clee Hill to upgrade and adapt instantly and removed worries about ageing hardware or unsecured networks. It's also increased the speed and accuracy by which we operate."

"For our customers, having access to services – such as on-call repairs and urgent bookings – is critical. The nature of our products sees them deployed in high-pressure, heavily regulated environments such as runways, highways and construction sites, so lacklustre performance or an outage can have serious consequences".

"As a hire operative with multiple sites and machines, communication is key to profitable trading and customer service. Everything from logging of equipment condition at handover and communications that capture booking opportunities relies on smooth, powerful IT. We identified that to retain momentum, our tech needed to match our ambition".

"Continuity protocols govern our customers' industries", Michael tells. "A significant proportion of business is acquired via tenders, of which entail guaranteed service levels. Assuring that our IT is watertight is critical to winning contracts".

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These factors spurred Michael to take proactive action. “I knew that more modern and powerful solutions were in order but needed expert help in realising the future”, Michael continues. “For us, there was only one place to turn – K3.

Over a 15-year history, we’ve formed a close relationship which sees us work as a united team. I knew I could rely on them to deliver the ideas, technology and support to get Clee Hill in our strongest ever position”.

The first stage of an ambitious three-step project was a server update and virtualisation. K3 implemented a new server environment using leading VMWare, Veeam and Microsoft Server OS software and updated all infrastructure from on-premise to cloud.

“This project has put us in a tangibly stronger position as a business and given me the freedom to focus on digital transformation, efficiencies and new projects. My long history with K3 is based on their understanding of us, our IT challenges and their flexibility. It really is a great relationship – collaborative, friendly and trustworthy. We’re a team”.

This highly-available and resilient solution could cope with 80+ users and the diverse requirements of business-critical applications, including rental management and call logging systems. To maximise existing hardware, colleagues accessed the server remotely via RDP.

“Moving from physical servers to a virtualised environment has allowed Clee Hill to upgrade and adapt instantly and removed worries about ageing hardware or unsecured networks. It’s also increased the speed and accuracy by which we operate. For example, when on site, we photograph equipment which is added to customer accounts on our server in real time. This protects us against unnecessary damages costs”.

Secondly came a best-in-class disaster recovery solution. Architected by K3, this included a dual database, backup and replication to an additional server at a second Clee Hill site. Now should disaster strike, the company can be back up and running within the hour.

“Great IT is non-negotiable for winning new business. With multiple plants, departments, business functions and wide customer geography, I have a lot of IT accountability, but now I’m confident and don’t need to worry”.

“DR doesn’t just protect service, productivity and profitability”, Michael explains. “It’s non-negotiable for winning new business, too. With multiple plants, departments, business functions and wide customer geography, I have a lot of IT accountability, but now I’m confident and don’t need to worry”.

Finally, K3 set up Office 365 for all users, equipping Clee Hill with the communication and collaboration tools essential in any competitive and growing organisation.

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K3 provide infrastructure and server support as standard but go the extra mile when Michael needs a hand. “As an IT Manager, I have the day-to-day covered. However, when I’m on holiday, the K3 team step in to assist with desktop support and they even mediate between various other providers. I can’t imagine receiving such genuine willingness to help anywhere else”.

