

Case Study - Burhill Golf & Leisure Group

Client Profile

www.bglcompany.co.uk

Industry: Leisure

Turnover: approx £100M+

Staff: approx 600 users

Locations: UK, Nationwide

An historic group of leisure clubs



Founded in 1926, the Burhill Golf and Leisure Group is a private, family-owned business employing over 1200 staff. Their portfolio includes 33 golf courses across 10 UK-wide clubs, as well as 19 sites of mini golf and soft play. Alongside the prestigious Burhill Golf Club, BGL group's brands also include Mr Mulligans, BUNKERS!, and Ninja Warrior UK – much-loved venues for young and old alike.

Following the success of their Mr Mulligans and Ninja Warrior brands, BGL group began an investment process to expand the brands into more cities across the UK. Doing so highlighted some fundamental deficiencies in their technology that needed addressing.

The Problem

Each BGL Group site requires many technology solutions to operate effectively. These include leased lines, wireless access points, PCs, EPOS terminals, CCTV, software, and networking equipment. Many of these solutions were provided by different vendors. As the number of sites swelled, so too did the complexity of the technology required to manage them.

“The problem we had is that historically we operated without a clear long-term strategy in place for IT” comments Bridget Jackson, Group IT Manager and Data Protection Officer for BGL Group. “When problems arose, we reacted to them with short-term solutions that did not consider the bigger picture.

Every site was therefore configured differently, making resolving issues incredibly time-consuming.”

Without suitable IT resources, BGL sustained their growth by taking a reactive approach to issue resolution. Each site was treated as a siloed entity, independently configured using different hardware and a different approach. Despite having a long-term relationship with an outsourced IT support company, the skillset did not match the specific requirements of a multi-site leisure group such as Burhill, whose locations are a mix of remote rural and busy urban areas.

The result was a distributed IT environment which was impossible to manage effectively. This caused stress for the leadership team and throttled their ability to add new sites. In some cases, technology issues delayed opening dates of new locations by months. Without adequate resource in technical project management, these issues all fell on the IT manager's shoulders.

“At any one time, it was common to have IT issues at 60% of our sites.” continues Jackson. “Those range from nuisances to crippling downtime.” The sheer number of outages meant cumulative man-hours lost per year swelled into the thousands. Confidence in the incumbent IT support provider had been lost and an alternative was sought.



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The Solution

"We reached out to several IT companies. Each brought their own expertise, but none of them could really match exactly what we needed, until we met entrust IT Group. They covered everything we needed, from hardware & software, to support. They also project managed everything meticulously which eased the burden on me."

Following a successful trial period project managing the opening of two sites in the Adventure Leisure division, the entrust IT Group was chosen as BGL Group's strategic partner.

In this partnership, the entrust IT Group would assume responsibility for almost all areas of BGL's IT. This included project planning and management, opening of new sites, and consultancy. The entrust IT Group's technical team handle management of the corporate networks, infrastructure, and security, as well as hardware procurement, configuration, and installation. They also handle vendor liaison, bringing BGL's large number of vendors together. Furthermore, the entrust IT Group's UK-based ITIL helpdesk co-ordinates issue resolution as well as rapid response to problems at sites anywhere in the country.

In addition, using their own datacentre facilities, the entrust IT Group provides private cloud facilities for some core services, resolving a security issue.

Throughout the implementation period, the entrust IT Group team outlined a project plan with steps and deadlines for each stage. Monthly meetings kept the BGL team well informed, and weekly email wash ups ensured that progress and issues were reported on regularly. Commenting on the implementation, Bridget Jackson said: *"It's never easy to move providers after such a long time, and our leadership team did have their concerns, but the detail in the project plan coupled with the regularity of the communications meant that those anxieties were eased quickly. The approach was structured and well thought out, and in the end we need not have worried. Implementation was as painless as possible."*

The Benefits

The entrust IT Group's solution was a radical overhaul of BGL's IT infrastructure, standardising new sites with a single hardware and software mix and retrofitting older sites to be remotely manageable. Reducing complexity has led to a sharp decline in support issues as well as downtime.

BGL are provided with live dashboards showing data on service desk performance, as well as showing the areas of their infrastructure that are generating the most support issues. These statistics inform long-term strategy for improving IT performance. To date, the entrust IT Group team have resolved thousands of support tickets for Burhill, with an average of 88% positive feedback. In addition, BGL receive two dedicated account managers which cover general and technical issues.

"Whereas I'd become accustomed to having issues at 60% of our sites at any one time" says Jackson, "now, that's down to less than 10%."

Reducing the complexity of each site also means that opening new sites is a significantly streamlined process. This means new sites open on-time, with fewer issues reported.

"The efforts of the entrust IT Group have led to outcomes that seemed impossible only a short time ago. We've now got 98% uptime. Every new site comes with a detailed plan and opens on time and within budget. The amount of time I'm spending chasing and resolving support issues has dramatically reduced, and the partnership has freed up a lot of time for the administrative team, which they are grateful for."

Above all, the strategic approach of entrust IT Group at Burhill means the business is now in a strong position for growth well into the future.



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The Future

Thanks to the success of the Adventure Leisure division, which includes the brands 'Mr Mulligans' and 'Ninja Warrior UK', as well as the new and exciting 'BUNKERS!' brand, BGL is investing in a period of high growth.

"We want to have an Adventure Leisure location in every major town and city in the country. We're currently in 20 cities and we're adding more in 2024, including in Northern Ireland – our first foray away from the UK mainland. This growth is possible because we're now confident we can deliver our new locations on time."

Additionally, thanks to a reduced support burden, Burhill is now able to pursue some important projects. These will further improve efficiencies throughout the business, as well as making the company more secure and future-proof.

"Changing partner for something as important and as complex as IT is never easy. There was undoubtedly some apprehension. However, the team at entrust IT Group made the transition as painless as possible thanks to their communication and careful planning. Working with them has been such a pleasure. I now know several of their team personally, and I know that there's always a human on the other end of the phone whenever I need them. Both myself, and our leadership team, are so grateful we made the switch"

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Bridget Jackson

Group IT Manager & Data Protection Officer
Burhill Golf & Leisure Group



Summary

- **Long-term Strategy:** The entrust IT Group produced a long-term strategic plan for IT growth that takes into account objectives of all major stakeholders.
- **UK-based IT Support:** A friendly, UK based IT helpdesk resolves issues with a nearly 90% positive approval rating.
- **Rapid on-site response:** Same day on-site response available for emergency technology issues.
- **A springboard for growth:** Standardising and streamlining technology makes adding new locations a breeze.
- **Security:** Proactive approach to locating and closing security holes in the infrastructure.



Find Out More

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