



The Client

Working Partners Holdings was founded in 1995. A story creation and rights management company for children's series fiction, its successes include Rainbow Magic, Warriors and Beast Quest stories. In the last 16 years, the company has enjoyed steady growth and now employs around 30 people based in London and around the UK, and across North America. Since 2005, Working Partners has developed two separate departments: Rights People, a specialist children's rights agency selling international rights to children's books, and The Greenhouse Literary Agency.

Background

By 2008, Working Partners' business had flourished, but its ad hoc IT systems were less stable. They had originally served the needs of a small, UK-centric workforce but were now unsuitable. Employees were suffering regular server disruptions which fragmented workflow, impinged on email communications and security, and frustrated productivity. The management took action after the server collapsed for a week during an attempted upgrade by a freelancer whose main responsibility lay outside IT maintenance.

Working Partners realised that, without expert IT support, their business was less efficient, less secure and less focused on core-business.

“
Before Principal overhauled our IT systems, we never quite knew what the day would bring, but now we don't have to worry about it. Principal brought expertise and efficiency, exceeding our expectations.
”

Charles Nettleton
Operations Director

Call us now on: **0800 132 908**



“

The upgrade incident brought it home to us. We didn't have the expertise or the resources in place.

”

Charles Nettleton
Operations Director

The Problem

A move to new office premises, the establishment of two new business arms, and increased numbers of staff working around the UK and overseas put pressure on Working Partners' existing IT systems.

- The email network included the use of different domains and a lack of unified outbound communication.
- The IT set-up was maintained by an employee whose main role was in a different department. Potentially, transactions and accounting business were at risk of neglect in the event of a sizeable IT problem.
- Staff experienced regular bouts of unexplained downtime, affecting internet connections, email and the sending of ftp files – all crucial to international and UK business.
- The company's worst server failure followed an attempted upgrade from Microsoft 2003 to Microsoft 2008. Staff suffered a week of zero access to email, internet and company folders. Inevitably, the situation impacted on contracts with business partners, internal and external administration, and product output.

The Solution

During the tender process, Working Partners were impressed by Principal's expertise and customer-focus, sensing the added value benefits of the support on offer. Nettleton asserts that

“

Principal are expert in what they do and provide a very personal service.

”

Need: Working Partners needed a stable server so that business could continue without disruption.

Response: Principal stabilised the server immediately. Its technical team investigated the existing network to understand it, troubleshooted the problems and made recommendations.

Need: Working Partners needed a simplified, secure company email system that was easily and safely accessible.

Response: Principal implemented new security and mail filtering systems with a unified mail firewall. They strategically improved the management of email groups. Remote desktop services were installed so users could access information stored at any office around the world.

Need: Working Partners needed guaranteed ongoing professional expertise and support they could rely on as and when. The core business could then remain the sole focus of employees' energies.

Response: Principal is providing unlimited remote support and silent monitoring to provide proactive and preventative support.

Principal was able to draw on expertise and project management experience refined over 15 years. The team recognised that Working Partners needed solutions that would integrate into their existing set-up. Operations Director Charles Nettleton praises Principal's ability to diagnose and deliver what was needed:

“

The two key things we wanted were a stable and secure system, and the knowledge that help is there whenever we need it. In this, Principal has exceeded expectations. They know exactly what is what. They are very conscientious and accountable for what they have taken on.

”

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The Benefits

- **Efficiency:** The improved efficiency throughout the business is a key result for Working Partners. Interruptions ranging from regular inconveniences to occasional server downtime are a thing of the past.
- **Peace of Mind:** Troubleshooting is now proactive rather than reactive thanks to unlimited remote support and silent monitoring. Nettleton recalls that,

“*we were always dealing with things as and when they happened, and had not been able to anticipate problems – so this new system is a major advantage.*”
- **Reliability and Security:** Principal’s expert delivery of more reliable, safer network connections is a crucial benefit for Working Partners. Staff communications are protected by anti-virus and anti-spam software whether they work on-site or off-site, from PCs or portable/hand-held devices.

The Future

Working Partners aims to sustain growth in both its core and wider businesses and to generate expansion in areas such as new media, including online games, social networks, TV and film. The company interacts with all the key children's series fiction publishers around the world, and, as the business develops further, its IT systems must follow suit. Staff rest in the knowledge that an expertly-installed and monitored network system will support them, whether in London, New York, Washington, D.C. or Toronto. Using a network that continues to grow strategically and intelligently alongside the business inspires confidence for the Working Partners team. As Nettleton puts it,

“*as we were growing in size, we had an IT vehicle that was the equivalent of a moped. In the end, everyone was trying to ride on it, and it was getting top-heavy, so it wobbled and fell over. Now we feel like we are riding in a safe saloon car!*”



Summer 2008

Staff at Working Partners begin to experience increasing problems with their email and internet connection following considerable business expansion and an office move. They do not have a dedicated in-house IT manager or outsourced professional support.

December 2008

During an upgrade from Microsoft 2003 to 2008 over the Christmas break, Working Partners' entire server breaks down.

January 2009

Staff return to work and find the office in chaos for a week until the server is resuscitated. Working Partners' management decides enough is enough and begins devising a tender process for professional outsourced IT support.

June 2009

One of Principal's Systems Account Managers and their Implementation Director make a successful proposal to Working Partners, beating stiff competition. The technical team commits to a 50-hour block of support. This includes a full network health-check, instituting a programme of regular preventative and proactive housekeeping, initial troubleshooting measures, and consultative recommendations. In discussions with Microsoft, with whom they enjoy Gold Certified Partner status, Principal diagnoses an underlying memory issue. After analysis and scoping, implementation of the project begins.

September 2009

Working Partners enjoys a stable server environment with enhanced email security for their staff in the UK and abroad.

January 2010

Working Partners contracts Principal for unlimited remote support and silent monitoring as part of an annual fixed-price agreement.



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Delivering Genuine Business Benefits



Company Overview

Principal Services

- IT Solutions & Support
- Office Solutions
- Printing & Copying Solutions
- Office Stationery & Consumables
- Office and Commercial Building Fit-Out & Refit
- Commercial Electrical Contracting

*What more could you ask for?
Well, ask away. We're listening.*

Principal

The Principal Group is an established name in the IT and office systems arena. Operating out of offices in London, the South and North East, our many successful projects extend across the UK and Europe. Principal was founded in 1987 by CEO Richard Cashman and generates an annual turnover of £16 million, employing over 100 members of staff. Though an independent company, we have earned supplier accreditations from leading manufacturers such as Microsoft, Konica Minolta, HP, Canon, Sharp, Panasonic and Samsung. We are also proud of our status as a Microsoft Gold Partner and a Hewlett Packard Preferred Partner whilst, Cameron Barclay Consultancy, our office fit-out and commercial electrical contracting division, are NICIEC and CHAS Accredited.

Your Principal

Principal offers a one-stop-shop service so you can convert all your needs into productive and efficient solutions with minimum fuss. Trust us, we can do it all. Simply talk to us and we will help you decide what is right for you, and we will make it happen. From office equipment and supplies to office refurbishment, from toner refills to data cabling, Principal is at hand...

Do you:

- Require IT solutions?
- Need to install/maintain equipment?
- Have an office to open, or need a refit?
- Want stationery and consumables supplied on time?
- Wish there was no downtime, or waiting ages for engineers?
- Pray for a magic wand to solve it all?

Well, we don't sell magic wands, as such. At Principal, we do provide the professional advice and smart technology needed to transform your business. What's more, we will show you how to save money and reduce waste. And you can enjoy real peace of mind with our second-to-none support services.

Not only do we at Principal provide outstanding expertise, service and products, we can be a single point of contact for all your office needs. With UK-only call centres, we're by your side, ready to listen, understand, and act. We use the latest technology, such as remote access support, for maximum efficiency, and you can always speak to a real person. At Principal, we're there for you from start to finish - and beyond.

Principal Commitment

Principal can make your business solutions:

Sleek

Improve efficiency, increase productivity, and reduce waste.

Savvy

Impress your clients and your finance director with innovative, cost-saving solutions.

Bespoke

Design a solution tailored to your individual business needs.

We stay in touch with the latest technology. We stay in touch with you. At Principal, we believe in combining technical ingenuity with good old-fashioned straight talk. If you don't believe it, just call us today and speak to a member of our informed, friendly team.

Call us now on: **0800 132 908**



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