Hewlett Packard Enterprise

AGFA
HealthCare

Objective
Deliver effective support for digital imaging solutions spread throughout 100+ UK hospitals

Approach
Created a flexible support contract that would give nationwide coverage for the Hewlett Packard Enterprise hardware

IT Matters
- Delivers a 24x7x365 Call-to-Repair service, resulting in high system availability and better performance

- Provides early warning alerts through effective remote monitoring

- Includes firmware upgrades delivered by an aligned Technical Account Manager and regular planning meetings with assigned Account Support Manager

Business Matters
- Avoids missed SLAs

- Provides a better service for hospitals and their patients

- Raises the company's profile and competitiveness within the UK health service

Agfa HealthCare safeguards critical medical systems

HPE Datacenter Care supports mission critical medical services

Agfa HealthCare has to deliver solutions in challenging environments with stringent service levels for its diagnostic imaging systems. Running on HPE hardware, the solutions are installed in over 100 hospitals across a wide geographic footprint, so providing effective support was a challenge. For Agfa, the solution was HPE Datacenter Care.

Challenge

Need for nationwide support
Providing effective support for critical IT systems can be a difficult task but it's even more challenging when the systems are located across a wide geographic footprint in multi-site NHS Trusts, within customer-provided infrastructures.

This was the situation faced by Agfa HealthCare, the global provider of diagnostic imaging and healthcare IT solutions. A Belgian multinational company with revenues of over €1.16 billion, Agfa HealthCare is part of the Agfa-Gevaert Group. With over a century of healthcare experience in medical imaging, it has been an active player in the healthcare IT market since the early 1990s and now has sales offices and representatives in over 100 markets worldwide.

"Medical solutions are highly regulated and we cannot afford any instances of data loss or outages, therefore proactive monitoring by Hewlett Packard Enterprise and resilient platforms are a critical part of our solution design. The HPE service allows us to focus on our solutions and not spend large amounts of time and cost managing our storage vendor."

— Philip Brown, third party service manager, Agfa HealthCare

Agfa HealthCare develops software for capturing and archiving various medical images but rather than delivering just the software, it wanted to provide customers with total solutions including both the software and the systems to drive it.

"We provide the full range of hardware from high-end workstations up to the core servers, tape libraries and storage," explains Philip Brown, third party service manager for Agfa HealthCare.

"We have a managed service model. Again customers purchase a service from Agfa and we deal with all the details regarding hardware, software and maintenance. Ninety-eight per cent of our systems run on Hewlett Packard Enterprise hardware."

HPE systems are purchased in Belgium and go to a staging depot where Agfa HealthCare and HPE staff configure the hardware, load the software and test the systems before they are shipped to the UK and installed in individual hospitals or other healthcare locations. However, that's not the end of the engagement because the systems are governed by stringent Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

This situation was created when the UK's Department of Health launched its National Programme for IT, an initiative designed to move England towards a single, centrally-mandated electronic care record for patients. It split the country into five regions and nominated five Local Service Providers (LSPs). Technology services company Accenture was one of these and was made the prime contractor to supply IT goods and services to England's North East and East Midlands region. It then sub-contracted the provision of digital imaging and image management solutions to Agfa HealthCare for seven years in a contract that includes 30 Trusts.

"Good support is critical because the customers need high availability and a solution they can rely upon," says Brown.

Solution

Flexibility is the key
Agfa HealthCare needed a comprehensive support plan and to solve the problem, it signed a Datacenter Care (DC) contract with HPE. Initially, this covered just the 30 Trusts in the LSP agreement but those figures have more than doubled since DC has been extended to other Agfa customers who are not part of the LSP contract.

HPE DC is an environment-wide support solution that is tailored to meet the individual needs of different customers. This flexible, relationship-based approach includes an Account Support Manager (ASM) who knows the customers' business and IT environments. Aimed at reducing complexity and risk, improving availability and performance, saving time and reducing cost, DC releases HPE customers from the worry of system support, leaving their staff free to concentrate on business issues and innovation.

Agfa HealthCare's DC contract includes a service connection to HPE, which remotely monitors the IT environment and provides proactive alerts and troubleshooting support. System upgrades are delivered by HPE Assigned Technical specialists only and the whole operation is based around an agreed Account Support Plan including regular monthly meetings with the aligned ASM who provides one point of accountability.

Flexibility is a keyword with DC, and Agfa has seen that in action as Brown explains: "the initial model was a swap out arrangement with pre-built equipment located at strategic depots in the country from where they could be quickly deployed, even out of hours. However, we found that we couldn't turn things round quickly enough to alleviate breaches of the SLAs so we looked to HPE to move over to a different model. Now, the key area is 24x7x365, Call-to-Repair which, in practice, is enough for us to meet SLAs."

Another aspect which underlines the flexibility of DC is a Media Retention Plan which has been added to the contract to meet customer evolving requirements.

"Healthcare sites are naturally concerned regarding the security of patient information, particularly in the electronic age. If, for example, a storage system had a failed disk they require that the disk is destroyed by a certified process, as it may contain patient data," says Brown. "We asked HPE to cover that off and they have done so."

In tandem with the DC contract, HPE has also undertaken Customer Asset Programme (CAP) audits to provide a clear picture of what equipment is in which hospital. HPE CAP collates an up-to-date asset inventory of the entire IT environment including location, quantity, server name, manufacturer, product numbers, serial numbers and product description. This enables Agfa HealthCare to pinpoint the physical assets on each site and confirm the required level of support.

Benefits

System availability
The main benefit of DC for Agfa HealthCare is that by proactively rectifying problems it achieves higher system availability and minimises any impact on service availability.

Customer at a glance

Hardware
- HPE servers
- HPE workstations
- HPE storage

Software
- Agfa HealthCare diagnostic imaging systems

HPE services
- HPE Datacenter Care
- HPE Customer Asset Programme
- HPE Insight Remote Support
- Defective Media Retention

"We can tailor the HPE Datacenter Care service, matching the level of support to individual items of equipment. We have everything covered and it's easier to manage our solution because everyone knows what to expect from HPE and what they need to deliver."

— Philip Brown, third party service manager, Agfa HealthCare

"In addition the remote monitoring with HPE IRS is also a very effective service," adds Brown. "It gives us 24x7x365 alerts into our helpdesk with a dashboard system and it will pre-warn us even before the customer is aware of a potential issue."

Currently, incidents come in to Agfa's helpdesk and are logged into the Service Management System then support requirements are relayed to third parties like HPE. With the new IRS system staff in the office will have a link and an application open on the screen with a direct connection to the web and HPE's portal. They can see red, amber and green traffic lights which will tell them if any sites are having issues and HPE will have already mobilised their engineers with the spare parts ready to ship to site. The benefit of this proactive solution is that it identifies faults before they actually stop equipment running and have a greater impact.

"Having our own ASM is also a huge advantage benefiting from their support, knowledge and contacts enabling us to continually move things forward in terms of the service we provide. We have regular monthly meetings where we go through reports and performance indicators, parts used and assess the whole estate to make sure that it is operating efficiently," says Brown.

As well as the operational and financial benefits of HPE Datacenter Care, delivering such a reliable level of service enables healthcare professionals to provide better patient care through constant access to vital diagnostic imagery. This kind of unique offering is something that both Agfa and HPE are extremely proud of and makes the partnership and relationship so effective. Potential issues are very often proactively resolved very quickly, well in advance, with no loss of service.

Learn more at
hpe.com/services/datacentercare

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