



MessageLabs[®]
Now part of Symantec



Crown Records Management

Established in 1965, Crown Worldwide Group has developed into a global company operating in five industries, across 200 locations, in 50 countries. In addition to its core Relocations business, Crown has added Records Management (now the world's third largest document management company), Logistics, Wine Cellars and Fine Arts services to its list of operations.

Looking after the technology needs of all five businesses is an IT team located at Crown's headquarters in Hong Kong. The IT team has to balance the needs of 4,000 employees globally, against the strategic IT direction of the company as a whole.

Crown employed MessageLabs' anti spam email managed service to filter the 2,000,000 emails received each month. In addition to reducing spam volume from 80% to virtually 0%, the MessageLabs service has improved productivity within the IT team, overcome global time zone support issues, provided a 24/7 back up solution, and enabled Crown's Records Management service to hit SLAs with its own customers.

A solution that works

Crown was protecting its 2,200 global PC users from spam and viruses using an appliance solution. And apart from requiring monitoring on an hourly basis to ensure that legitimate emails (or false positives) weren't being filtered out, the device appeared to be up to the job - until one day it simply stopped working properly. Chris Davis-Pipe, Group Vice President of IT, for Crown Worldwide, says, "The appliance was working fine until we applied a normal software update and then box slowed down to unacceptable levels – taking hours to process and filter incoming emails."

The IT team worked closely with the appliance vendor for two weeks to fix the problem, but it soon became evident that the time delay was beginning to have not only major operational impact on the company, but also financial implications.

Explains Davis-Pipe, "We quickly became aware of the impact that the slowness of the device was having. Our Records Management business has service level agreements (SLAs) with all of its clients. This means that typically if a customer requests access to documents, we provide them within a specified time frame, usually within hours or the next day – if we fail to meet those deadlines there are financial penalties. These access requests are often received via email meaning that even a short delay in receiving email can cost Crown money. In the case of the defective device, the two week problem period had the potential to cost the business US\$1,000,000. We knew that email was business critical, but we hadn't considered the financial implications fully."

Unforeseen benefits

Having been dependent on a hardware solution, the Crown team realised that they needed to take a different approach. "We'd previously spoken to the MessageLabs team here in Hong Kong and given the problems with our device, a managed service was very attractive," says Davis-Pipe.

The evaluation process took place over just ten days. "We could have done it much quicker as it's technically very straight forward – actually turning on the service took just a few hours. But MessageLabs provided us with a two-week trial that enabled us to test the service with the UK Records Management operation before rolling it out globally. The results were overwhelmingly positive. The time delay was eliminated and this meant that the risks of missing our SLAs and financial loss were successfully mitigated." explains Davis-Pipe.

The experience post roll out has been positive. Says Davis-Pipe, "It just works. For us that provides peace of mind, reduces our business risk and frees resources to work on projects that add value instead of monitoring email."

While email is business critical, we were facing the reality that we didn't have a second device to fall back on when the original one stopped working. Now we don't need to worry.

Chris Davis-Pipe,
Vice President of IT,
Crown Worldwide Group

The SLAs are a hot button for us. Since we have to deliver on SLAs ourselves, it provides peace of mind to know that we're protected by MessageLabs' SLAs.

While the managed service was able to solve Crown's most immediate problem, there has also been a number of additional benefits for Crown.

Global infrastructure

All Crown's incoming email is routed through Crown's email gateways in Hong Kong, where the appliance was also located, before being delivered internally around the Group. Before adopting MessageLabs Crown's appliance was receiving around 2,000,000 emails per month which were 80% spam. That meant that an IT administrator had to check the appliance every hour to ensure legitimate emails weren't being filtered out. This also presented support challenges as the system wasn't being actively monitored at night when other time zones (such as the UK) were working. MessageLabs' real time managed service provides a global infrastructure that provides 24/7 support. It also meant that Crown could free up the IT administrator to work on other, more productive projects.

MessageLabs' redundant global infrastructure and managed service also meant that Crown didn't need to worry about a back up plan. "While email is business critical, we were facing the reality that we didn't have a second device to fall back on when the original one stopped working. Now we don't need to worry," adds Davis-Pipe.

Delivering on service

With email so important to the financial success of some of Crown's operations, MessageLabs' SLAs also took on significance. Explains Davis-Pipe, "The SLAs are a hot button for us. Since we have to deliver on SLAs ourselves, it provides peace of mind to know that we're protected by MessageLabs' SLAs."

Another unforeseen benefit has turned the MessageLabs' service into a potential selling point for Crown. "A number of our large clients are in the financial services or legal industries and consequently are very security focused. Before implementing MessageLabs' managed service we had to rely on manually encrypting emails and documents when we communicated with them. Subsequently, we've found out that many of them are also MessageLabs' customers. This means that in addition to being able to prove to them that we view security as imperative, we can also take advantage of MessageLabs' secure email services to automatically provide a secure email channel from Crown to our customers. Now we can use MessageLabs security as point of differentiation for Crown." adds Davis-Pipe.

Solution at a glance

Business drivers

- Emails are business critical - Crown Records Management financially impacted by delayed emails
- 2,000,000 emails each month
- 80% spam volume

Technology challenges

- Internal spam device had slowed to unacceptable levels
- Dedicated resource required to manage device and check for false positives
- Global business resulted in time zone support challenges

Solution

- MessageLabs Email Anti Spam Managed Service

Size of organisation

- 4000 employees, 2200 global PC and email users
- 200 locations in 50 countries

Business value and technical benefits

- Improved productivity for IT team and end-users
- Ability to deliver on customer SLAs
- Global infrastructure offering 24/7 support
- No hardware to manage internally
- MessageLabs secure email services used as a selling point to financial customers

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