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Customer Case Study

Riello UPS assures Business Continuity for engage

engage Mutual Assurance in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, understands the importance of UPS protection.

Its 40-strong telebusiness and customer service teams rely on continuous uptime from computer servers, networking and telephone equipment, enabling them to handle upwards of 260,000 calls per annum (approximately 700 a day). Any interruption to business - caused by power problems - could result in expensive losses in sales, reputation and important customer data. They could also damage sensitive computer equipment resulting in costly repair or renewals.

In addition, extended interruptions could result in failure to comply with stringent regulations set down by the governing bodies of the financial services sector.

The story behind the need

UPS protection for the computer room, which runs all of the data processing equipment for the business as well as the telebusiness and customer service communications systems, is critical to the company's successful operation. The call centre acts as the hub. Calls range from customer service queries to new business enquiries and must be dealt with in a slick, timely and professional manner.

Call centre staff use bespoke customer service software to facilitate each call and handle customer enquiries. They rely on the computer room to be working at full capacity throughout the day.

Regulatory Compliance

As a financial institution, engage has also to adhere to stringent regulatory requirements, such as the Basel II Accord, that sets standards including strict downtime tolerance levels.

With the Internet, customers have become accustomed to accessing information and services all day, everyday. As a result, maintenance and backup windows are diminishing. Within the financial services sector, the new accord for capital adequacy for banks is groundbreaking in that it specifies risk not only in terms of capital risk but also in terms of operational risk. The requirements to map and contain operational risk mean that Basel II has a direct impact on the business continuity market.

David Barber, facilities team leader at engage, takes up the story: "We'd had our previous 40kVA UPS for ten years, it was time to review our power protection strategy along with upgrading the existing unsatisfactory UPS solution, which was old technology and could no longer meet our requirement".

Following a strategic bid, specialist reseller Advanced Power Technology Limited supplied a 60kVA Multi Dialog UPS in partnership with leading manufacturer, Riello UPS. Advance Power Technology also carried out specialist engineering work and intelligent switchover from the old to the new solution. This part of the exercise had originally been planned for a weekend to accommodate system downtime, but it went ahead during working hours with no disruption to the business saving considerable man-hours and overtime.



Telebusiness and customer service teams now protected by Multi Dialog UPS

Richard Vaughan, Project Manager at Advanced Power Technology, explains: "This job was particularly fast and efficient. We supplied the computer room with the UPS, a dual feed and 10 year design life battery extension pack in a matching cabinet. The old UPS was disconnected on a Monday, removed from site on Tuesday (along with batteries and cabinet). The new UPS, batteries and cabinet were delivered on the Wednesday and the unit was connected and commissioned on Thursday of the same week - all without disruption to the operation of engage's computer systems. None of the staff would have known we were there."

Testing Times

Shortly after installation, the new UPS showed its metal and was tested in earnest when an interruption to the mains supply within engage's facility caused a short power failure. It lasted no more than five seconds but because of the UPS, no-one - other than those directly involved in IT support and business continuity - noticed it.

Smooth handover to new system

Going back to the system change over, Mr. Barber and his team fully expected to have to schedule this for a weekend when system shutdown would cause minimal disruption. This would have involved inconveniencing IT staff by asking them to work during their private time, plus having to pay them overtime. But the engineers at Advanced Power Technology were able to bypass and isolate the old UPS, which was then disconnected and removed, at the same time as the new MultiDialog UPS was put into position, connected to the mains and bypass supply, the battery connected and the unit made ready for commissioning.

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email
telephone

sales@riello-ups.co.uk
0800 269 394

service@riello-ups.co.uk
0800 298 5355

tec@riello-ups.co.uk
0800 781 7959

FLEXIBLE POWER. INFLEXIBLE PROTECTION

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All work was carried out during working hours without any need for disruption or system downtime.

"We fully expected we'd be handing over on a weekend and had even budgeted for the overtime but Advance said that wasn't necessary, performed the task and next thing we were running on the new UPS. Most of our call centre and computer room operators wouldn't have even known there had been a change over." Says Mr. Barber.

The Riello Multi Dialog UPS uses double conversion on-line technology (VFI) and has several operating mode options. It can incorporate an active harmonic filter to achieve less than four percent total harmonic distortion and draw a near perfect sinewave from the mains to meet the requirements of G5/4-1:2005.

In on-line mode, the load is powered continuously by the inverter to remove sags, surges and brownouts, through filters to suppress transients, spikes and electrical noise. Even in bypass mode, the load is routed through the filters so that it is never connected to raw, unconditioned mains electricity.

When mains power fails, the inverter, which is constantly powering the load, simply draws power from the connected battery to provide complete protection. PowerShield UPS monitoring and control software provides remote communications and can instigate a controlled shutdown of computer systems in the event of an extended power cut.

"What really stood out for me about Advance and Riello," Mr. Barber concludes, "is that, having listened to me, they offered the most competitive solution tailored specifically to my requirements. I wanted a UPS that would meet our current needs but equally allow for expansion in the future. They supplied a package that will take this company from the cradle to the grave."

About engage

engage Mutual Assurance is a financial services organisation dedicated to providing simple, accessible, value-for-money life assurance, savings plans and investment products to customers throughout the United Kingdom and from all sectors of society. It is the trading name for Homeowners Friendly Society Limited, which was established in 1980, and engage Mutual Funds Limited (eMFL). It is also one of the companies recently committed to providing the Government's new Child Trust Fund savings initiative.

engage also recently further increased its profile by became the title sponsor of the high-profile Rugby Super League, now renamed engage Super League.

Its mission is to enable people to protect their welfare and its primary objective is to have a relationship, either directly or indirectly, with every household in the country. Through rapid business expansion in the last four years (the company has doubled in size since 2002), inclusion in the government savings initiative and with Riello UPS power protection, it is on course to meet this goal.



engage Mutual Assurance



TEC is a specialist consulting team within each Riello UPS company that provides project management, design and installation advise for both standard and bespoke Riello UPS designs. Each TEC member is appointed based on their engineering background and experience within the power protection field. For more information call **0800 781 7959** or email **tec@riello-ups.co.uk**