



Experian Integrated Marketing

Case Study



PTS Consulting's specialist technical expertise supports complex Data Centre migration.

The Client:

Experian Integrated Marketing (EIM) is a specialist marketing services provider that helps clients to get the most from every marketing pound. They do this through a powerful combination of data, software and expertise and engage with clients as wholly strategic partners, as trusted advisors or on one-off projects.



EIM's core activities include: Design, build and management of large-scale, high-performance data solutions; Delivery of insight and analytics as solutions, services or co-sourcing; Marketing strategy consultancy; Best practice marketing techniques, to improve business performance; Support and management of large, complex marketing programmes and campaigns. EIM is a division of Experian a global leader in providing information, analytical and marketing services to organisations and consumers.

The Challenge:

The nature of EIM's business means that it stores an extensive amount of data which underpins its clients' integrated marketing activities. EIM and its clients thus require secure, 24x7 access to this data. In early 2006, Experian acquired specialist marketing services company, ClarityBlue. At this time, the existing lease on the Data Centre in St. Albans was



nearing completion and termination and it became clear that EIM would need to seek new premises for their Data Centre. With the strategic decision to merge four Experian divisions, including ClarityBlue, to create EIM in July 2007, a clear natural solution existed to migrate all services into advanced state-of-the-art Tier

4 Data Centre facilities that were available in Nottingham. Vital campaign platforms were built as independent client platforms with data stored on secure Storage Area Networks (SANs) within the St. Albans Data Centre, previously operated by ClarityBlue. All campaign platforms were managed and serviced by the operations teams based in Luton and on-site in St. Albans. EIM's clients implemented and managed dedicated data network connections into their environments in the St. Albans facility.

With the expiry of the lease of the existing premises, EIM faced an immovable deadline. It was important that the migration project did not affect BAU activity. From a technical viewpoint, it was clear that some of the unique issues associated with EIM's campaign platform builds were going to challenge all those involved in the project.

The majority of the platforms were built on Linux AS3 OS with data stored on HDS SANs. Total data stored and to be migrated securely to Nottingham was in excess of 100Tb in size, making this a project of considerable complexity. PTS Consulting was engaged to provide technical Project and Programme Management assistance to the EIM team in migrating Data Centre activities from St. Albans and Bristol to the Tier 4 Data Centre facilities in Nottingham.



Karen Hardy, Applications and Service Delivery Director at EIM explained: *“EIM employed PTS Consulting to assist in our Data Centre migration project due to its technical expertise in this area. Although EIM had Programme Managers of our own, we had never moved a Data Centre before and were facing a tight timescale. With a project of such size and importance, it was imperative that it went smoothly with no disruption to our operations. We were confident that PTS Consulting had the specialist knowledge to ensure the Data Centre migration was achieved to specification and to deadline.”*

The Solution:

Technical Solution Design: The first aspect of the Data Centre Relocation was to design a comprehensive technical solution that would enable the successful transfer of all data, servers and network connections to the new Data Centre location. Working with Experian themselves, as well as specialist data specialists IBM & Techtrade, a solution was agreed and a series of test migrations took place. A ‘Swing SAN’ was rented and a process of attaching servers via a SVC (SAN Volume Controller) – data would be mirrored onto the ‘Swing SAN’ device, at the point of migration, the ‘Swing SAN’ and the migrating servers would be migrated to the new Data Centre and the process of mirroring onto their new SAN would take place, a complete process of 5 days from start to finish. Over a period of 5 months and 12 migrations later, the St. Albans Data Centre was dismantled and rebuilt in Nottingham.

Data Centre Relocation Project Management: PTS Consulting devised a pragmatic operational plan for the Data Centre Relocation and worked with the EIM client support teams to communicate the methodology and activities to migrate the clients’ platforms into Nottingham. Each migration activity was managed as a separate project, platform designs differed, connectivity from the client differed, and, client maintenance windows differed. In all circumstances the project scope, drivers and risks were assessed and managed through to completion. Karen commented: *“The variations in each of our client’s schedules made the Data Centre migration a highly complex project. With PTS Consulting concentrating on the technical detail to ensure client needs were met, we could get on with the day job.”*



The Benefits:

PTS Consulting’s involvement in the Data Centre Relocation helped devise a detailed schedule for EIM, its clients and the professional team members to work to. All disparate systems were successfully migrated onto resilient platforms. PTS Consulting’s technical and client focused project management skills enabled EIM to focus its own resources on the office Relocation programme as a whole and avoid any risks of data loss or downtime. Key features of the project include:

- High performance Data Centre facility on a stable, future proof platform
- Technical design assistance for consolidation of 100 terabytes of data from 2 sites on 200 servers
- Data Centre Relocation project management and testing over 12 weekends
- Secure 24x7 access to critical data and centralised platform for ease of management
- Solution programme designed specifically around the client’s user requirements
- Communication with all 3rd parties to ensure Data Centre programme was fully co-ordinated with the overall Relocation project



The Verdict:

PTS Consulting's attention to the overall detail made sure that the needs of EIM and all its clients were met and the IT migration programme was achieved within the Relocation project deadline. The new Data Centre facility now houses all of EIM's IT data on a secure, stable, flexible and future-proof platform.

Karen concluded: *"PTS Consulting settled in to the team and adapted to EIM's culture extremely quickly. We work in a demanding, high pressure environment and must provide our clients with 24x7 access to their data. PTS Consulting understood these needs and was able to provide the technical expertise to ensure that our Data Centre migration was conducted efficiently, with no downtime to EIM or our clients' businesses."*

About PTS Consulting

PTS Consulting Group PLC (PTS) is one of the world's leading IT consultancies with a reputation for innovation and thought leadership. PTS is also renowned for its project management expertise. As the global leader in IT relocation projects, working with some of the world's largest companies, PTS has earned a world-wide reputation for independence, professionalism and quality of service. Headquartered in the UK and founded in 1983, PTS has worked in over 70 different countries, 250 cities and employs more than 330 staff in the Americas, EMEA and Asia-Pacific. www.ptsconsulting.com