



Graytone

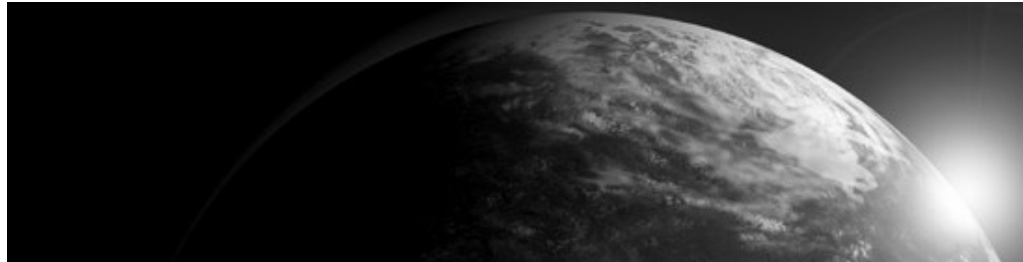
Graytone was founded in 2000 to spearhead a group of companies specialising in the distribution of products and coatings to the aerospace and defence industries. The core capabilities of the group are sales, marketing, distribution and logistical solutions for hazardous goods and coating materials within Europe.

The Graytone Group consists of four operation subsidiaries:

- Paint Services Group Ltd (PSG) - the largest distributor of aerospace, defence and specialist coatings in Europe
- Pexa Ltd - a supplier of high technology materials to the aerospace and defence industries
- Pexa SARL - a Marseilles based logistics and sales centre that acts as a specialist supplier of high technology aerospace and defence materials in southern Europe
- Graytone Consulting - a Business to Business consultancy offering a range of international services including sales representation, logistics, business development, recruitment, technical services and paint shop design and installation.

Graytone employs some 50 people throughout Europe and given its multiple offices and remote staff, the ongoing availability and reliability of the IT infrastructure is crucial. Some 5 years ago, Graytone evaluated the potential of outsourcing the management and control of its hardware estate. "Our resident IT expert had accepted a position with another company and this, combined with our growth meant that we would probably need at least 2 full-time in-house specialists," explained Tony Swayne, Graytone's Finance Director.

Comprehensive Managed IT Services Deliver Immeasurable Benefits.



An Attractive Alternative

In reality the situation was more complex. Graytone has a wide range of hardware - servers, printers, laptops, PCs, etc. and even in-house the business will still need to call on specialist external expertise. This, combined with the need to provide holiday and illness cover, support outside normal office hours and the ever present possibility that one of these crucial members of staff may resign, made outsourcing an extremely attractive alternative.

"When we first considered outsourcing the maintenance, management and support of our infrastructure it was a relatively new concept," continued Tony Swayne. "But the more we evaluated the benefits that such a move would deliver, the more we became convinced that it was the right business decision for us."

Graytone evaluated service offerings from a number of managed service providers before deciding to partner with Sol-Tec. "From the outset we were impressed with the breadth of knowledge that Sol-Tec brought to the table," added Tony Swayne. "Within their organisation they had expertise in a diverse range of specialisations and we felt confident that they would be able to resolve any issues that arose, no matter what the platform."

On Time and To Budget

Since 2004 the partnership between Graytone and Sol-Tec has matured in line with Graytone's growth. Sol-Tec now provides Graytone with a comprehensive portfolio of managed IT services delivered to tight SLAs (Service Level Agreements).

In addition to managing and maintaining the existing IT infrastructure, Sol-Tec works closely with Graytone on an increasing range of projects. "Quite recently we formed a new business near Marseilles," continued Tony Swayne. "We asked Sol-Tec to design, test and implement the new French infrastructure, which they did - on time and to budget."

The Beauty of the Service

In addition to hardware maintenance and application support, Sol-Tec also provides Graytone with proactive server monitoring. Graytone's server farm (15 servers) supports the entire group, with local print and file servers in each office.

Sol-Tec monitors the performance of the servers on a 24x 7 basis, identifying potential issues and failures and rectifying them before they can adversely impact the infrastructure.

"The beauty of this service is that we can rely upon our servers totally," explained Tony Swayne. "As far as we are concerned, Sol-Tec's server monitoring service just happens in the background and even if some problems arise, Sol-Tec will fix them - usually without us being aware of any degradation in service whatsoever."

SOL-TEC

Microsoft

GOLD CERTIFIED

Partner

Immeasurable Benefits

Moving from in-house IT support to a fully managed IT service has been extremely successful for Graytone. In addition to freeing up budgets so that more 'business-critical' staff can be employed, Graytone now has access to a wealth of specialised knowledge and expertise that guarantee the day-to-day reliability of the group's entire IT infrastructure.

"The benefits that we see are immeasurable," continues Tony Swayne. "We can focus on growing our business and responding to our clients' needs, secure in the knowledge that our systems and applications are in safe hands."

Graytone now has no in-house IT staff. Sol-Tec recently developed and implemented a software support portal so that any user queries or issues with applications software can be registered via the portal and immediately acted upon by Sol-Tec technicians.

"This solution has streamlined the applications help-desk side of things," explained Tony Swayne. "We are seeing issues being resolved far more efficiently and effectively and, of course, it also enables us to monitor the response levels that Sol-Tec delivers."

The partner of Choice

Every three years, Graytone reviews its contract with Sol-Tec and obtains competitive quotes from other managed IT service providers. "No matter how many other organisations we evaluate, Sol-Tec always comes out as being the most cost effective and efficient option," said Tony Swayne. "They understand our business and have the breadth of experience and the depth of expertise that we need – both for today and for the future."

Currently, Sol-Tec and Graytone are working on a number of complex IT projects, particularly in the communications arena as the on-going availability of voice and data links between the group's various offices and remote staff is becoming more and more business critical.

"Sol-Tec keeps up-to-date on all aspects of IT," concluded Tony Swayne. "They make recommendations and give advice based around their extensive knowledge of both the IT industry and our business. Sol-Tec is not just our partner – they are an extension of our organisation."

Service Benefits:

- **Pro-Active Server Monitoring** – ensures on-going availability of servers.
- **Pro-Active Back-Up Monitoring** – all server back-ups are monitored to ensure success.
- **IT Administration** - complete IT administration service includes setting up new users, removal of old users, increased email store allocations, etc.
- **Helpdesk Support** - via telephone, e-mail or User Support Portal.
- **Network Security Management** – ensures the latest 'signatures' are installed on release to maximise protection.
- **Pathway Asset Management** – detailed asset information including asset specification, location, software licence information and associated maintenance agreements.
- **Warranty Agreement Management** – centralised management of all warranty agreements.
- **Web and E-Mail Content Filtering** – minimises the impact of rogue materials entering the network.
- **MPLS based connectivity structure** - gives Graytone the flexibility to share information and applications.
- **Enhanced Disaster Recovery** - all servers can be replicated immediately by restoring the virtual servers.

SOL-TEC

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