

The Customer

Hamel & Co. Chartered Accountants is a successful small business accounting firm located in downtown Ottawa, Ontario that caters to personal and corporate clientele. Being in a knowledge-based industry, Hamel has become more reliant on information technology (IT) when dealing with confidential client data. Like all accounting firms, Hamel & Co. have defined periods of high-activity during month-, quarter- and year-ends, and, of course, tax season. These peak periods make the availability of their IT infrastructure (desktops, laptops, network, peripherals, connectivity, etc) essential. In addition, the delivery of support for outages or issues is more time-sensitive. Missing critical filing dates for personal tax returns, as an example, due to system outages is not an option.

The Situation

Before signing with The Utility Company, Hamel was buying IT support in a reactive 'block program' where they would purchase 30 hour blocks at \$100 per hour and then 'draw down' from their allotted time span when needed. As the company became increasingly reliant on their technology and the ability to collaborate remotely, the draws became more frequent; in the last 2 months they used 70 hours (\$7000)! Besides the exorbitant cost of break/fix service calls, Hamel sensed they were not a priority for their former provider. Marcel Castonguay, Partner at Hamel & Co., felt the service they were receiving was disruptive, haphazard, not timely and certainly not proactive to help prevent **future** issues.

"When purchasing reactive support, or outsourcing, the service provider gets paid to be on-site and the more times you call them, the more they get paid", stated Marcel. "Also, if you're a small firm, like we are, you don't get the sense that you are their first priority when support calls are placed. If a 'bigger fish' has a problem at the same time, the natural inclination for the technical support is to serve the bigger client first."

Additional issues included:

- Back-ups of critical customer data were not being done properly despite being charged \$100 per week.
- Two main Partners were having difficulty connecting remotely to the office and required remote support.
- End user support for less technically-savvy Partner was time-consuming.
- Their internet connection was sporadic.
- Capital outlays for new hardware & software created fluctuations in budget at inopportune times.

The Solution

The Utility Company presented Hamel & Co. with a new alternative to hiring an internal resource or continuing with their existing break-fix service provider. Hamel chose a Connected Office "managed" level program that provided them with:

- **1-866-My-Utility Live helpdesk** to support end users with secure remote access to their network and desktops for on-demand service and training.
- **Remote monitoring and management** of their network, desktops/laptops, security and data-back-up 24x7.
- **Security & protection** – ongoing anti-virus and patch management service.
- **Online backup and storage** – remote backup of servers, desktops and laptops
- **Asset & lifecycle management** – tracking of all hardware and software assets, including updates, usage and compliance.
- **Onsite Service** – emergency support, onsite maintenance, end-user training as required.
- **Hosted Exchange** - advanced communications features like always-synced email, advanced anti-spam, global address list, shared calendars, web mail, mobile access and shared public folders.
- **Network Assessment** - in-depth analysis of current technology versus business needs, including spending and utilization.

The Result

Priority service, thorough security, protection and regular back-up of client and corporate data, significantly reduced on-site service calls and overall satisfaction were the primary results of Hamel's move to The Utility Company. The ability to work remotely and leverage a unified communications strategy was also important in their decision.

Moving to The Utility Company's fixed fee managed service program allowed Hamel to realize significant savings and understand their costs month-to-month rather than try to budget for wild fluctuations in IT spending. The move also granted the option to effectively "annuitize" the costs of new hardware acquisition, so new purchases can be made at any time rather than waiting for receivables.

In the near future, Hamel is looking to add The Utility Company's Connected Office Web Content Management service for a professional and update-able corporate website.

Customer's Thoughts

"We have contracted technology support in the traditional block service model for years," stated Marcel Castonguay, Partner at Hamel & Co. "This model works well if you are not reliant on technology to operate your business. The Utility model really brings us into the 21st century by proactively monitoring and remotely managing the infrastructure we have, while trying to reduce its complexity and cost with solutions like online back-up and other hosted applications and services. We have moved away from wild variances in fees and service levels to a predictable, insurance-like model with The Utility Company."

Utility's View

The combination of our 1-866-My-Utility helpdesk and the Utility Service Center remote monitoring and management platform results in the majority of Hamel's support incidents being detected and resolved remotely - no downtime or onsite service calls to distract their staff", stated Mark Scott, President of The Utility Company. "Unfortunately, the old model is about businesses paying a service provider or technician to put them back where they were yesterday. With us they are paying for uptime instead of just break-fix technician time!"

There is a new way – join The Utility Revolution!

The Utility Company is a global managed service franchise that provides information technology as a *utility* to small and medium-sized businesses, delivering the required hardware, software and service for a monthly fee per user. We were founded to address the two major problems plaguing businesses today:

Over-spending - the average business spends **\$360 per user per month** on technology

Under-Utilization – unfortunately **only 15%** of this investment is actually utilized

Our mission is to ensure our customers only invest in the technology they require to **operate, communicate and manage** their business effectively. **Our vision** is to transform information technology into what it should be – **a utility**.