

KRONE UK Case Study

Hertz



HOME-FROM-HOME

There's a European Community in miniature just north of Dublin. All major languages are spoken but the talk is about car reservations rather than taxes or politics. Ambassadors they most certainly are, for the international Hertz organisation. There's a lot of networking going on too, as *Andrew Emmerson* explains.



With Hertz nothing but the best will do. That applies equally to its customers, its staff and its operations, declares its European MIS Director, Paul Bermingham, whose base is the new extended European service centre at Swords, close to Dublin airport and ten miles from the city centre. He states: "Our mission statement for the centre is to provide a service that exceeds our customers' expectations, while our vision statement demands that we be models of service excellence within the Hertz Corporation, amongst our global competitors and the Irish business community."



Having the right tools to do the job helps of course, which is why Hertz has just extended the customer service centre and equipped it with the latest ICT infrastructure. To mitigate the effect of equipment failure the networking hardware is fully duplicated, whilst generous spare capacity has been built into the cabling system to minimise dislocation when moves and changes inevitably occur.

Prudent move

Iain Cosgrove, MIS Manager at the Hertz Europe Service Centre explains, "Because we service our entire European reservations operation and

many of the financial back office functions from this single location we cannot allow even the slightest glitch to occur.

Everything from customer reservations to customer accounting, customer relationship management and other operations that support a business are carried out from here, by telephone, post, e-mail and fax. In all we look after eight countries—Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and of course the UK. Whenever a customer calls from any of these countries, it's here that their enquiry is dealt with. When you consider how our entire operation relies on this one location, making the support system uninterruptible is highly prudent."

The service centre is moving towards a paperless environment. Currently a number of key documents are scanned to disk for subsequent on-screen recall and reference. Telephone calls account understandably for much of the centre's work and calls are routed here from Hertz customers in each European country. All inbound voice calls for both reservations and customer relations are handled by dual Rockwell Spectrum automatic call distributors (ACDs), whilst an Ericsson MD110 switch handles the administrative functions. Cisco infrastructure handles the data side of things with two 6509 core switches and 13 4004 workgroup switches, with 100BASE-T to the desktop.



Highband

The new network that supports all this is with little doubt one of the largest installations in Ireland. As befits a state-of-the-art facility, it is to the ratified Category 6 standards and uses the KRONE PremisNET™ solution throughout, installed between January and December of last year. Stage 1 took cables branching from the two comms rooms to KRONE Highband® IDC Connection modules in underfloor consolidation points, whilst the second stage, phased with the other works of finishing the new building, extended the network to three RJ-45 connection points on each desk – some 4,000 outlets in total. Says Iain, "Everything has been designed for maximum flexibility and ease of use. So we stipulated separate voice and data ports at each workstation, with two spare sets for every four desks. For every eight to 12 desks a separate concentration point with comms, data and mains power outlets is provided and this built-in flexibility means that any individual workspace can be replanned and consolidated without the need for major recabling."



Resilience is the other fundamental design feature of the network, with all major elements duplicated. The cabling system originates from different comms rooms and is designed in such a way that should one of the comms rooms fail for any reason the effect on business would be minimal. A complex voice and data backbone cabling system has also been incorporated to complement built-in reliance features in the active equipment. He relates how he has powered down one of the two 6509 switches and seen the whole network reconverge within one 'ping', without any user noticing. There are numerous file servers, two ACDs and four comms rooms. The entire network has been configured so that any critical device could fail without disrupting operations and the link to the outside world is duplicated with ISDN backup.

Attractive location

'Home from home' is an entirely appropriate way of describing the service centre, for not one but two reasons. To begin, it's an attractive location; set in parkland, the brand-new extension is bright and airy, with many picture windows. Staff have the advantage of

a superb restaurant plus a gymnasium to lose those pounds afterwards. There is also a cybercafé where people can surf the 'Net and transact their e-mails off-duty (for security this facility uses entirely separate network connections).

State-of-the-art workstations make working hours more agreeable too. The modular furniture has an aesthetic design, with ergonomic aspects that can be assessed by an on-site occupational health nurse. Our staff are one of our greatest assets," declares Paul, "so the facilities are an investment, not an overhead.



Thirty different nationalities are represented among our 1,200 people on site, working in office areas that correspond to the different countries served by Hertz. We see this cultural diversity as an asset and it's reflected not just by the flags and mementos in each section but by our core values that are an integral part of our working environment on a daily basis.

Tall order

In charge of installing the structured voice and data cabling installation was the Dublin-based firm CISCom Technology Ltd. Although no problems occurred

during the installation process, it was nonetheless quite a tall order, according to CISCom managing director, John Bentham.

There were, he explained, strict handover dates to be observed at each phase of the building operation, working in a multi-contractual environment meant the installation team had to be vigilant to ensure the installed Category 6 cables were always protected; replacing damaged cables after a phase was completed was not an option.

CISCom designed and customised the concentrator floor-boxes using KRONE Highband® modules, then had them approved by the Hertz IT team. The vast size of the workplace, coupled with the resilience stipulated by the client, meant the cable installation and administration methods were quite complex. Installing 4,000 cables in phase 1 and another 4,000 cables in phase 2 also meant they had to produce and maintain accurate drawings and records. These documents were critical to the Hertz IT team, who performed all final device connectivity in a very short timeframe.



He continues, "The process was made much easier by the excellent working relationship we had with the Hertz project manager, Ray Casey, and his team.

Unquestionable quality of materials and workmanship were also stipulated and I think it was our choice of KRONE components that secured the Hertz contract for us. We use this brand exclusively thanks to its very high specification, years of good experience and the excellent technical and sales support we get from KRONE and our local distributor, Wood Communications.”

Number one

Paul Bermingham concludes: “The extended European service centre is a great source of pride to Hertz, to our people and I think, to the Systems Integrators who put it all together for us. Hertz is number one in car rental and the service providers we choose are also number one. To all of them I pay tribute—establishing this centre was an extremely satisfactory operation.”



Number crunching

The bill of materials used at the Hertz European Service Centre was as prodigious as the building itself, using

- 4,000 PremisNET KM-8 RJ-45 outlets
- 384 PremisNET fibre outlets
- 2,000 Highband connection modules

- 16 PremisNET fibre panels
- 260km of PremisNET Cat6 UTP copper cable
- 3km of PremisNET multimode fibre cable

Why Hertz is still number one

Hertz is proud to be the largest car rental company in the world, providing quality rental service for 80 years. A wholly owned subsidiary of the Ford Motor Company, Hertz operates from approximately 7,000 locations in more than 150 countries. Extra service ranging from enhanced computerised driving directions to emergency roadside assistance make it easy to see why Hertz is number one in car rental.

CISCom, based in Dublin and formed in August 1996, provides specialist services in structured cabling and networking systems. Currently Ireland’s leading KRONE Associate Installer, CISCom is sole provider of cabling and network services to a number of leading financial institutions, IT companies, universities and government sectors in Ireland, currently employing 20 full time staff.

The company provides installations and after sales service of the highest quality and, backed by KRONE, CISCom offers a 20-year performance warranty that ensures that their systems will meet or exceed current European and international standards.



John Bentham, managing director, declares: “CISCom continues to pride itself on attention to detail, delivering projects to specification, on time and within budget. However, the demand for greater bandwidth leading to the emergence of new technology means as a specialist we must now work to closer tolerances. Our firm has a grounding exclusively in IT and this gives us the edge, with a better understanding of the critical nature of installing the latest higher frequency cabling systems. A cable isn’t just a cable; it is now an intricate part of any business system network. A badly installed cabling system will not support emerging high-speed applications and that’s the bottom line. On this basis we continue to invest in ongoing staff training and the latest testing equipment to ensure our clients’ investment in infrastructure is guarded against obsolescence.

Why KRONE?

Because choosing the right path is critical

Reading the signs carefully when making your network build decision really does pay off. Cutting corners on structured cabling can seem an easy option at the outset – it's only further down the road at commissioning or when the users log on that the cracks appear.

Performance & peace of mind

- Fully warranted PremisNET® copper & fibre infrastructure solutions.
- Independent Cat 6 & Cat 5e Component Certification
- Fully tested, 100% compliant patch cords
- Future proofed & upgradable blown fibre
- Leading service & support through the best Distributors & Installers in the UK
- Number 1 supplier of patch panels & data outlets in the UK
- 25 million KRONE voice modules installed

Why KRONE?
Because when you buy something you expect it to work.



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Major reworks, repairs and delays

For further information on the highest quality structured cabling solutions visit www.krone.co.uk/whykrone



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