

Case Study

Belvoir Lettings

COBWEB



Belvoir Lettings 'let' Cobweb Solutions take care of its communications needs

With the property lettings business booming, 2008 was Belvoir Lettings' most successful year ever in terms of brand recognition and growth. The agency picked up the Gold Award at the British Franchise Association Franchisee of the Year awards, and was also one of just nine finalists selected to compete for the title of Franchisor of the Year.

1 Customer Profile

- Industry** : Lettings Agents
- Business Start Date** : 1995
- Number of Premises** : 140 Offices
- Number of Employees** : 400
- Services with Cobweb** : Business Email, Anti-Virus & Anti-Spam Protection, Journal Mailbox and Web Hosting.

The past few years have seen Belvoir experiencing huge growth, expanding to over 140 offices across the country. By choosing to outsource their web hosting and business communication management to a trusted IT partner, the franchise group has avoided expensive infrastructure and software purchasing, set up and maintenance costs.

As the biggest individual lettings company website in the UK, Belvoir's online presence is extremely important to the business, being the group's biggest source of customer enquiries.

Due to the nature of the operation, whereby a mixture of different types of email accounts are required to meet the particular needs of each franchisee, flexibility and reliability were key requirements.

This ongoing period of growth has seen Belvoir taking advantage of Cobweb's Hosted Microsoft Exchange service to cater for over 500 separate mailboxes throughout the UK – more than doubling its usage.

2 The Challenge

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This growth was easily accommodated by the fully scalable service, which allows companies to add users as their business expands. With shared access to email, diaries and address books from anywhere at any time via a secure internet connection (including via BlackBerry, Windows Mobile Device, iPhone etc.), staff are able to benefit from the full functionality of the system, which is recognised as the world's leading business communication platform.

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Tel: 0845 2070708 Email: sales@cobweb.com www.cobweb.com



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3 The Solution

Certain items of the Cobweb service have proven to be of particular value, specifically the comprehensive antivirus and anti-spam protection, and the Journal Mailbox feature – whereby a copy of every email sent is archived for future retrieval – which has been extremely helpful for referring back to previous correspondence for legal purposes or when disputes arise.

The group runs its own helpdesk, with a dedicated support email address, and this needs to be accessed by various users. When researching service providers Belvoir found that most other hosting companies were not able to do this. The Belvoir Lettings website is also hosted by Cobweb, as reliability and guaranteed 'up time' are crucial to the business.

Andrew Goddard, Belvoir's Head of IT, comments: "We do everything we can to help our franchisees to operate successfully, and that includes spending time, money and resources to ensure that they are able to run the business smoothly and efficiently. After two and a half years with Cobweb, we have chosen to remain a loyal customer because of the exceptionally high standard of service that Cobweb delivers and, most importantly, the flexibility that is available to us.

Our experience of Cobweb is that they have always been able to offer first-rate help and advice whenever it is needed. We were invited to visit the offices and data centres, and we also frequently attend their open evenings. Opportunities like this, where we are able to make face to face contact with the very people who look after our communications needs, have been a key factor in establishing an excellent relationship with the Cobweb team. We know who we're working with, which adds the vital 'human' element that can often be missing from other service providers.

We pride ourselves on being able to provide the benefits and support of a national brand alongside the advantages provided by local ownership. We advocate the use of sound business principles to guide individual franchisees and enable them to fulfil their maximum potential.

The solutions and support provided by Cobweb have undoubtedly helped us to achieve this by allowing us to carry out our business more efficiently."

Michael Olpin, Finance Director for Cobweb Solutions, added: "I am pleased that Cobweb's trusted experience and knowledge has contributed to Belvoir achieving their business goals.

Personally I am very passionate about Cobweb delivering a real value-added service that will help their SME business grow and that can offer them the flexibility to meet the individual business requirements.

As Belvoir continues to expand, they can rest assured that the Hosted Services migrations will remain simple and effective due to our experience, knowledge and systems, making it simple for them to scale."



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