

●● Collective Responsibility



By deploying bluesource's consultancy skills and experience in Microsoft Exchange environments and electronic messaging solutions, BMS Management Services, the services arm of leading insurance broker, BMS Group, was able to address the business issues associated with cumbersome company mailbox quotas, growing volumes of spam, coupled with the inability to archive, search and retrieve email in line with compliance legislation.

“We don't impose email quotas on staff, as the use of email is paramount for communicating and receiving information pertaining to the day to day running of the business”

BMS Management Services Ltd is at the centre of the BMS Group's operations and provides IT, Financial, Marketing, Operational and HR support to the individual operating companies, leaving them free to concentrate on meeting the advisory, broking and consultancy needs of their clients.

BMS is a group of specialist businesses, which together comprise one of London's premier independent insurance and reinsurance broking organisations. The company currently operates in ten global locations, with the bulk of staff working from its London-based office.

With 400 mailboxes to maintain across the company structure, David Park, Head of IT, was looking for a solution to address the growing volumes of email, including unsolicited spam, and the unwieldy mailbox quotas that were increasing at an incessant rate.

“We don't impose email quotas on staff, as the use of email is paramount for communicating and receiving information pertaining to the day to day running of the business,” said David Park, Head of IT, BMS Management Services.

“We receive large attachments via email, such as photographic evidence to process claims, and documents relating to claims history, so we needed to be able to rely on our email system. We knew the challenge was to improve resilience, negate potential failovers and control and maintain email volumes, to ensure the system ran smoothly and could archive and retrieve all unstructured data in line with legislation set by the Financial Services Authority and Sarbanes Oxley.”

A case for control

With unworkable inboxes, and mail stores and Exchange servers struggling to cope with the demands of growing email volumes rendering the messaging environment unstable, the issue of spam had reared its head. Storage capacity had reached 400-500 GB and following a review of the IT challenges to be addressed, David Park also wanted to filter viruses and spam in an automated and cost-effective manner.

Historically, BMS's spam prevention system was heavily reliant on manual intervention to decipher a valid email from the email that had been quarantined. In order to release an email from quarantine, the system relied on a member of the helpdesk support team to check individual emails, which was both time consuming and could potentially expose staff to all kinds of unsolicited communication from external parties.

Insurance Policy

Following the attendance of a breakfast briefing around the issues of email compliance, David Park met with bluesource and discussed the messaging issues he was looking to address.

The journey is better together

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bluesource is a leading specialist solutions provider that uses its proficiency within the Microsoft Exchange and messaging environments to help companies implement the right solution, bridging the gap between business benefit and IT. bluesource enables clients to utilise internal resources more strategically.

Park and his team enlisted the help of bluesource to produce a proof of concept, scope and design the project which would involve solutions to both address email management and retention for compliance and auditing purposes as well as virus and spam filtering. In turn, the new messaging infrastructure would improve the reliability and resilience of the Exchange servers, freeing them up to eradicate failovers and maintain the speed and robustness of the global messaging environment.

Working with leading specialist solution provider, bluesource, an email management solution was rolled out across all departments to ease the burden of unmanageable and growing email stores, increasing storage costs and IT infrastructure instability associated with long-term storage requirements.

“We chose bluesource because of their experience and proficiency”

As a Platinum Symantec Partner, bluesource uses the industrial strength of Symantec's Enterprise Vault to archive data by storing email messages in a compressed format, utilising the functionality of message journaling within MS Exchange, thereby reducing the cost of email storage. Enterprise Vault enables users to significantly reduce risk and increase operational efficiency while meeting regulatory requirements for compliance and adhering to best practice and corporate governance for electronic data retention. Performance is dramatically improved and users enjoy instant and transparent access to all of their email without associated cost and management issues.

The system offers a journaling feature that BMS were keen to put in place. The company is required to store all information pertaining to an insurance or reinsurance policy. The journaling feature archives all email sent and received through the company, to provide that all important audit trail if ever required for legal purposes.

“With no restrictions on email quotas, the bluesource solution has enabled us to set policies to archive email after four weeks,” commented Park. “Email is then filtered into a separate vault and keeps the system running smoothly, without users worrying about how to retrieve archived email as the system is both transparent and user friendly. All our journalled email is stored in a part of the system that is separate to the archived email, so again, we have this separate repository that is solely for the purpose of legal discovery and is readily available if required.”



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Spam Manager

To combat the issue of spam, bluesource implemented an email security, anti-spam and virus solution powered by MessageLabs. The anti-spam service scans email that comes into an organisation, looking for messages suspected of being spam and redirects these messages to a web-based, password protected area, where the onus is put on the end user to view and retrieve any messages thought not to be spam.

“The anti-spam system has enabled us to free up a significant amount of time and put the responsibility back on the users to check their daily spam reports so they can decipher email, quickly and effortlessly,” said Park. “If after 30 days, users haven’t deleted the messages, they are automatically deleted, helping to streamline the system.”

Since working with bluesource, BMS has been able to get their messaging environment back on track, improve performance and reliability of their mailstores and Exchange cluster located in the UK.

“We have control of our email system once again and as we use a storage area network, don’t have to constantly throw more disk space at it”

“The solutions were highly effective,” noted Park. “We have control of our email system once again and as we use a storage area network, don’t have to constantly throw more disk space at it, so we have seen cost savings as well as performance and reliability enhancements. Users have stopped complaining about trawling through potential spam and we have a constant and maintainable mailstore. bluesource continue to support the systems and provide first line helpdesk support to the MessageLabs and Symantec solutions. bluesource has helped us see that there is a better way of running the system and would recommend them to any company facing the same challenges that we’ve addressed.”

