



Case Study 06

Cisco buy back, e-learning credits and Ranger network management solutions

How Insight's single source model delivers complete focus on education – Plymouth High School for Girls: A Technology School.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Requirement

Plymouth High School for Girls (PHSG) were seeking a single source IT partner to assist in them in the development of their IT infrastructure. This strategic partnership would need to encompass simple product supply through to consultancy, network design and management services. PHSG required a partner who was able to accept e-learning credits and understood the importance of enhancing their prestigious 'Technology School' status – In essence, a reseller with demonstrable expertise in the education sector.

Solution

As a vendor independent IT solutions provider, Insight was able to deploy dedicated Account Management in the form of both an education specialist and a solutions specialist from the Insight Solutions Group (ISG). Working in close partnership with PHSG, Insight provided unbiased guidance and advice across many elements of the schools IT requirements incorporating Cisco buy back, e-learning credits and provision of a manageable Ranger Suite network solution.

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Specialist Schools came into existence in 1987, but were not fully embraced until the Labour Government took power in 1997. The Specialist Schools Trust is a government run organisation liaising with both LEAs and schools to “strengthen and develop the teaching of specialist subjects and disseminate best practise” and to “provide high quality learning opportunities for the schools' wider community”.

With the expeditious rise of IT focus across primary and secondary education some of the country's highest ranking schools have been issued Technology School status. Such an award comes with endorsements from both local and national businesses as well as educational centres of excellence keen to encourage the spread of Information Technology to the young. Through the use of ICT, the school is expected to partake in a “rigorous four-year development plan”, enabling the school to raise performances in mathematics, science and design and technology. “With greater funding and a more acute awareness of the potential of ICT in schools, comes a greater responsibility to the community”, comments Head of IT at Plymouth High School for Girls (PHSG), Peter Neve.

“With the increased funding we receive from the government and local businesses, we, in turn, must provide ICT facilities to both PHSG pupils, and the community as a whole. The provision of our ICT facility does not begin and end with our pupils, but we have a responsibility to serve primary and secondary schools in the surrounding area also. With this

responsibility and funding comes a greater need to invest wisely, and ensure we engage with companies, such as Insight, with an excellent knowledge of the requirements of the education market as a whole”.

Insight is recognised nationwide as both a supplier and a resource to the educational market space. Through strong working relationships with major manufacturers such as IBM, Cisco, 3Com and Hewlett Packard, Insight offer extensive educational discounts. However, although value for money is important to any school, the superlative services and expertise Insight make available to the lower education sector emphasises its commitment to forward-thinking institutions such as PHSG.

“We had used Insight from time to time for IT peripherals, but our first major purchase was several Cisco switches, simply because the prices were remarkably competitive” comments Cletus Moiso, IT Manager. When Plymouth's IT staff attended BETT in 2004, Cletus met with a Cisco specialist from the Insight Solutions Group (ISG). “ISG were really helpful at BETT. We had spoken before the event, and I was offered a free network consultation on our current infrastructure. This, and the Cisco buy-back initiative saved the school thousands of pounds”.

ISG provided a complete future proof solution, which would allow PHSG to create a network path, incorporating both voice over IP and video, without the need to renew the core infrastructure.



As part of Curriculum Online, the Government introduced E-Learning Credits. E-Learning credits were launched in the autumn of 2002 and are to continue until 2006. Over this time, it is estimated that some £330 million will have been made available to schools to spend on predominantly curriculum software, however many major software vendors are now accepting e-learning credits. In the financial year, 2004-5 every school will have received £1000 and in the region of £9.73 per pupil.



The aim was to ensure the scalability of the solution with the minimum amount of cost to the school. So as to ensure the best value for PHSG, ISG put forward a plan for the school, which would integrate PHSG's existing switches, with new chassis based switches for the backbone. Any switches, modules or routers which could not be utilised would then be sold back to Cisco under the Competitive Technology Migration Programme (CTMP).

Despite the services provided to PHSG by Insight, there is no tie-in contract as is commonplace with many other education focused companies. Insight's primary focus is delivery of both expertise and product to customer; with no need to bind the PHSG into a contract. "We have seen time and time again, the 'old-guard' of ICT delivery to schools tying in their customers to contracts and selling products that are not, and will not be used by the school in question. There is a greater shift now of schools moving away from the more traditional players in the market, to those working with the more IT savvy schools of the 21st Century", said Mike Atkins, Public Sector Sales Director at Insight.

PHSG are now working with Insight on their E-Learning Credits allocation from the government, which is centralised and headed by Clive Pool, the E-Learning Manager. E-Learning credits have been used to procure site licenses of products such as Macromedia Dreamweaver, Autocad and other innovative software brands to ensure that the students are provided with the best possible training for life after school. "It is imperative that the E-Learning Credits are spent wisely for the continued development of the students' ICT skills. The procurement process through Insight could not be easier, and the advice we have received from single box software, through to Virtual Learning Environments has been second to none" remarked Clive Pool.

Insight have provided both consultation and implementation tools for the Ranger Suite to be installed throughout the school. This has enabled a complete network management solution. PHSG recognise the need to protect pupils from the dangers on the web through management and visibility of students' online activities. Key management principles include

limiting access to certain websites as well as to have complete control over file size downloads and account allocation.

Insight is able to provide both a fully licensed Ranger solution backed with full installation and training capabilities.

PHSG identified a need for a tier one supplier who could provide a complete solution when it received 'Technology School' status in 2003. With the extra funding came greater responsibility, and as such a further requirement to deploy a partner to offer assistance beyond that of simply providing IT hardware.

Insight have proved that it is not necessary to tie in a school to a contract, but to offer education-specific solutions with regards to E-Learning, Virtual Learning Environments, Ranger Suite and the respective expertise to ensure PHSG maximise the benefits of these investments. Cletus Moisob remarks; "Insight have truly illustrated the value of a single-source supplier. The assistance and level of service we have received has been a great success and we look forward to continuing that success for years to come."