



# The Oxford Knowledge Company implements fixed cost managed services contract for reliable, business-as-usual IT – 24x7

## IT 'landscape' is clear for ADP

"Managed services" is an increasingly common term in industry today. As more and more organisations of all sizes choose to outsource core operations such as IT services, it makes sound sense not to rely purely on in-house expertise to support such a critical business 'backbone'.

And, competently managing IT requires time and effort; resources which if not effectively controlled, can potentially jeopardize a company's ability to meet its client service levels.

ADP – one of the UK's most prominent architecture practices – recently opted to take the managed services route. The partnership has appointed Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, The Oxford Knowledge Company, to manage its entire IT server and desktop application infrastructure – across five national locations.

### Continuum

Over the past decade, ADP has certainly embraced the digital age, shifting the balance of its core internal reports and client design materials from largely paper to digital format.

To date, the company's diligent in-house IT strategy has kept pace with the progressive and rapid changes in both its internal and external client expectations. However, progress requires a continuum of contingency. Under a fixed cost managed services contract, The Oxford Knowledge Company is solely responsible for providing technical advice, support and maintenance, either remotely via its service desk, or by deploying technical consultants out to specific ADP sites.

### Single entity

In the mid-1990's, ADP's IT estate was fairly basic, explains IT Director, Marc Thomas: "It was a case of two people sharing one computer, and architects were struggling to access systems as often as necessary."

He adds, "A decade ago, clients would have been satisfied with handwritten reports and design notes. Today expectations have risen considerably and extensive, but nevertheless essential, complex design documents are now part of our everyday lives. To support these, we need to know that our IT systems will keep working – no matter what."

In 1997, when the company installed its first email system, Thomas advised ADP partners to begin a phased expansion of the infrastructure. "We needed to work as a single entity between sites, centralising and sharing our client files. Our ultimate aim was to achieve 'a computer on every desk' across our five offices: which today is of course a reality."

## About ADP



ADP doesn't design for design's sake.

As one of the UK's most prominent architectural practices, with over 40 years' experience, it offers clients the expertise and resources of a large organisation; and the energy and personal touch of a small one.

With 100+ staff at five national locations in London, Oxford, Birmingham, Manchester and Yeovil, ADP applies local knowledge and creative flair to industries including education, commercial, conservation and healthcare, to produce contemporary designs that are innovative, but understandable and simple.

**"AFTER REVIEWING AND INVESTIGATING FIVE COMPANIES, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE OXFORD KNOWLEDGE COMPANY HAD THE RIGHT LEVEL OF EXPERTISE TO COMPETENTLY TAKE OVER THE RUNNING OF OUR IT INFRASTRUCTURE. ADDITIONALLY, THEIR CONSULTANCY BACKGROUND, METHODICAL, STRUCTURED AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH SEEMED TO FIT ADP'S ETHOS. THEY WERE JUST ON OUR WAVELENGTH."**

**Marc Thomas,  
IT Director,  
ADP**

## Rationale

So, what was ADP's rationale for outsourcing its IT services to The Oxford Knowledge Company?

As a practice, ADP's primary concern is maintaining high client service levels, not facing technology issues, continues Thomas: "Consequently, we were looking to confidently outsource our entire IT environment – a sizeable decision.

"After reviewing and investigating five companies, it was clear that The Oxford Knowledge Company had the right level of expertise to competently take over our IT infrastructure. Additionally, their consultancy background, methodical, structured and innovative approach seemed to fit ADP's ethos. They were just on our wavelength.

"In cost terms, we were attracted by the fixed monthly rental fee covering hardware, software and services. Not only will we have no unforeseen or unlimited costs resulting from IT support calls, but we can redeploy budget elsewhere. It's ideal; a 24x7 service with no adverse surprises."

## 'Traffic light' monitoring

How does the managed services contract work? The Oxford Knowledge Company's Business Development Manager Robert Arnold explains: "Our service desk is a central point of contact for ADP's users during normal office hours. We also offer out-of-hours support so there'll always be someone for their users to talk to."

Arnold adds, "The majority of technical issues are resolved immediately over the telephone, but if a query is more complex, one of our consultants will manage it through to resolution, keeping ADP informed along the way.

"Essentially, the crux of our managed services offering is that we detect any issues within ADP's network well before they're apparent to the end user. It's a kind of 'traffic light' monitoring system. We're always in control."

Thomas continues, "Now well into contract, The Oxford Knowledge Company has quickly and admirably grasped our often complex business concepts and practices. It's working really well and for me personally, my inbox no longer gets overloaded with technical support requests."

## One step ahead

He concludes: "Certainly, handing over the reins to our entire IT infrastructure was not a decision we took lightly.

"But we're certain that The Oxford Knowledge Company will keep our IT strategies and systems not only moving with the times – but one step ahead of them. And ultimately, knowing that our network is in capable hands for a fixed monthly fee means that ADP can focus on business as usual – architectural innovation."

## Solution & Services Scope

- Management of:
  - File, database and email servers on Windows Server 2003
  - Windows XP 100- node desktop environment
- Remote and on-site hardware and software 'fixes', installations and upgrades
- Installation and ongoing management of Distributed File System (DFS) for synchronisation of data between offices
- 24x7 responsibility for functionality of all hardware, operating systems and applications
- Warranty facilitation with OEM vendors
- Conducting of regular IT infrastructure health check
- Wide Area Network (WAN) management including Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) for rapid data transfer

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IT Director,  
ADP**

For more information please visit:  
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