

Finally, to enable Expert to maximise the potential of its new Wi-Fi network, Novi implemented an advanced retail analytics platform that will provide an overview of store footfall.

The benefits

The work carried out by Novi for Expert Electrical has had a real impact on the company, providing true business continuity and improved cybersecurity while also enabling it to experience the benefits of retail analytics for the first time.

The upgraded infrastructure provides Expert with increased performance and reliability. At the same time, the introduction of virtualised servers has significantly reduced the amount of maintenance required and has driven down the total cost of ownership. As well as this, the introduction of a virtualised environment enables Expert to avail of Novi's advanced cloud-based disaster recovery service, meaning that the business can continue to operate with minimal impact in the event of an unplanned outage.

Expert's new Wi-Fi network coupled with the Fortinet Firewall solution contributes to greatly reducing the organisation's risk profile. The provision of distinct Wi-Fi networks reduces the risk of cyber-attack, while the ability to segregate systems on the network means that business-critical systems will remain secure, even in the event of a cyber incident.

The new network has also made it possible for Expert to make the most of advanced retail analytics, which has helped the business to gain a better understanding of customer trends and enabled its marketing team to create better and more engaging campaigns to attract shoppers.

Kate Tierney said: "Prior to working with Novi we were concerned about the reliability of our IT infrastructure and our vulnerability to an attack by cybercriminals. However, this project has eased all of our concerns. We now have a secure, reliable and high-performance setup that ensures that we remain up and running at all times. What's more, the implementation of advanced retail analytics will provide us with an insight into the success of our marketing campaigns, and enable us to create more effective campaigns going forward."

Ongoing support

Expert Electrical has continued to work closely with Novi. Kate Tierney concluded: "This project has given us real peace of mind; our data is safely backed up, and we have a secure, reliable and scalable infrastructure that will serve our needs for years to come. The work done by Novi will also significantly reduce the amount that we were spending on maintaining our old systems, saving us money in the long run.

As well as providing increased security, reliability and performance, Novi's proactive service model provides Expert with a system that is constantly monitored to prevent minor issues from becoming major problems. George O'Dowd, managing director, Novi, said: "Novi designed and implemented an all-new IT infrastructure for Expert Electrical, providing the retailer with a reliable and secure framework on which to do business. Expert also now receives a scheduled weekly site visit from one of our engineers to monitor any potential issues and help the company to maintain a high-performance infrastructure."

Kate Tierney, financial controller,
Expert Electrical, said:

"From the very start of this project, our goal was to find a service provider that was capable of providing effective monitoring services, but who would also prevent downtime by identifying any potential issues before they escalated. Novi's proactive approach got our attention and George and the team were just so helpful from the outset."



NOVI

Technology for Business

Case Study

Expert Electrical

IT Managed Services

Novi gives Expert Electrical the edge
with increased security and performance

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Background

Expert Electrical is Ireland's largest electrical retailer. The company has undergone rapid expansion and now boasts a network of 63 stores nationwide. Expert Electrical works directly with leading global technology brands to bring them to Irish consumers.

The challenge

Every Expert Electrical store houses many hundreds of Internet of Things (IoT) devices such as smart TVs, games consoles, and other connected appliances. For these devices to receive updates it is important that they can connect to the internet to download the latest software. However, this presents many security concerns, as cybercriminals could potentially access one of these smart devices as a means of accessing Expert's network. The continued growth of cybercrime meant that this presented a real risk, which the company was eager to address.

Expert had not upgraded its IT infrastructure in several years and relied on old infrastructure in its Mullingar headquarters for its business applications, file storage and backup needs. However, as the retailer continued to expand, its older infrastructure came under increased strain.

Expert regards its customers' privacy as paramount. The company wanted systems that ensured the security of customers' financial and personal data, particularly with General Data Protection Regulation legislation coming into force. It also wanted to make sure data was safely backed up and could easily be recovered in the event of a breach. Novi's AirGap solution was the perfect fit.

Expert also wanted a solution that would help to measure the effectiveness of its marketing campaigns. Unlike online stores, brick and mortar businesses find it difficult to assess the impact had by marketing on store traffic. Kate Tierney, financial controller, Expert Electrical said: "While our old IT infrastructure had served us well for a number of years, continued growth coupled with the increasing risk of cyber-attacks caused us to reassess our existing setup."

"The increased volumes of data that we were saving meant that our old servers were not fit for purpose or trustworthy and our cloud backup solution was causing us problems; we couldn't be guaranteed that it was saving all of our data. We also had concerns about the reliability of our Wi-Fi network and the ability of our Firewalls to fend off cyber-attacks.

"As Ireland's leading electrical retailer it is important that we have a reliable and efficient IT infrastructure that enables our employees and retailers to work productively while also minimising external threats. We decided to align with a managed service and cyber security service provider, and it was at this point that we approached Novi, who came very highly recommended."

The solution

When looking for a managed service partner (MSP), Expert wanted one that would monitor its IT infrastructure and provide a proactive level of service. It was also important that the new partner would keep them frequently updated, communicating potential issues as well as suggested improvements.

Kate Tierney commented: "From the very start of this project, our goal was to find a service provider that was capable of providing effective monitoring services, but who would also prevent downtime by identifying any potential issues before they escalated. Novi's proactive approach got our attention."

Novi's initial assessment established that Expert's infrastructure was based on a legacy architecture consisting of standalone systems. These systems needed to be combined and moved to a virtualised environment. Novi also opted to migrate some services to the cloud where it made sense.

Expert also needed a fast and reliable wired and wireless network. Novi opted to install separate networks, meaning that in-store IoT-enabled smart devices can remain connected to one, while Expert's employees and point of sale (POS) systems use their own distinct networks. The provision of separate networks makes it much more difficult for cybercriminals to access Expert's systems.

Novi introduced email security measures and a high-performance Fortinet Firewall cluster to facilitate network segmentation, meaning that in the event of a cyber-attack or data breach, Expert can ensure that the business' core systems remain isolated from any affected devices.

Novi also implemented its off-site data backup service AirGap alongside a customised disaster recovery service for Expert, which will help the retailer to protect its data from cybercrime.

Why Novi

- Passion for helping customers grow through better IT
- Proactive service model
- Flexible managed security offering

The Features

- Virtualised servers
- High-performance Wi-Fi network
- Increased security with Fortinet Firewall
- Retail analytics

The Benefits

- Increased performance
- Improved security and reduced risk
- Business continuity

