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Martin Swarbrick, IT Project Manager, Riverford

CUSTOMER: Riverford Organic Vegetables

SOLUTION: High availability hosting, plus Microsoft Dynamics AX

BENEFITS: End-to-end 24/7 support of an online e-commerce business

SITUATION

Riverford Organic Vegetables is one of the largest organic vegetable home delivery box schemes in the UK. Over 85 different vegetables are grown on the farm in Devon, and are generally picked one day and delivered to homes right across the south of the UK the next.

The ordering system is deceptively simple – customers enter their postcode on a website, choose and pay for the type of vegetable box they want delivered and then sit back and wait for their weekly delivery of delicious organic produce.

In reality, however, the system that handles each order from the initial online transaction to regular delivery every week, including any extra orders that customers may add on an ad hoc basis, requires a diligent control of everything from the site's availability and functionality, to careful monitoring of the stock held on the farm – right up to timely delivery to thousands of homes.

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SOLUTION

Initially, when Riverford approached Blue Sky, they were looking for someone to host their e-commerce website. However, as time went on and Riverford's business continued to grow from strength to strength, it was clear that the company needed their entire business infrastructure reliably hosted and maintained.

Blue Sky's first step was to create a hosting solution that could handle the company's stringent requirements – and keep up with its growth and development.

They chose high availability hosting to deliver a truly robust, fail-safe specification of hardware, infrastructure and security round the clock. The tailor-made solution for Riverford includes infrastructure redundancy to ensure that there is minimal risk of interruption to the service even if there is a serious server or hardware failure. And top-level security ensures that customers can enter payment details for repeat orders with total confidence.

The next step is the current integration and hosting of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. Microsoft Dynamics AX has been chosen for its integrated, adaptable business management solutions that will help Riverford keep close control of their finances, maintain close relationships with customers, track the success of marketing activities and connect entire supply chains so that the status of vendors and business partners can be seen at glance.

RESULTS

The three-year relationship between the two companies has resulted in a mutually rewarding business partnership that has led to Blue Sky being seen as an extension of Riverford's IT department.

The availability and reliability of the hosting solution has contributed to Riverford's phenomenal growth in a highly competitive market, as customers receive excellent service online. And the new features offered by Microsoft Dynamics will undoubtedly contribute to increased efficiencies in distribution, improved customer satisfaction and reduced cost of doing business