

DATA CENTRE DESIGN, BUILD & MIGRATION

Data centre migration helps SEGRO manage its property portfolio



SEGRO is a UK Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), and a leading owner, asset manager and developer of modern warehousing and light industrial property. It owns or manages 5.7 million square metres of space in £6.0 billion of assets*, serving 1,200 customers from a wide range of industry sectors. Its properties are located around major conurbations and at key transportation hubs across eight European countries, principally in the UK, France, Germany and Poland.

Headquartered in the UK, SEGRO plc has a listing on the London Stock Exchange and is one of the largest REITs in the world. SEGRO serves a diverse customer base, operating across a wide range of sectors and representing both small and large businesses, from start-ups to global corporations.

Previously, SEGRO contracted managed IT support from a third party, coupled with Workplace Recovery positions and some colocation space at Sungard Availability Services' London Technology Centre. When the equipment at its Manchester-based primary data centre approached end-of-life the astute property developer took the opportunity to review its entire IT strategy.

After carefully considering business needs, SEGRO opted to own and manage its IT equipment but also buy-in selected Managed Services as it would reduce the workload of the small in-house IT team, enabling them to focus on other business tasks.

At the same time, SEGRO made the decision to relocate its primary data centre from Manchester closer to its Slough offices which are effectively the hub of its day-to-day operations.

SEGRO recognised it needed to find a technology partner capable of designing and building its new data centre, as well as hosting both its production and recovery environments. Having a well located data centre close to Slough was a key factor and so SEGRO shortlisted reputable providers with facilities closer to home, including Sungard AS, and invited them to tender. Following the process, Sungard Availability Services were the selected bidders.

Andrew Terry, SEGRO IT Manager, said: "Out of the six or so companies we talked to, only three could offer what we were looking for – data centres in the right locations, the Managed Services we needed and competitive prices. We already knew Sungard AS's reputation and track record. We expected them to provide high availability and having spoken to other IT managers about their experience with Sungard AS, we were filled with confidence."

Business challenge

With its ageing IT infrastructure approaching end-of-life, SEGRO needed to rethink its entire IT strategy and make the best use of limited in-house resources. It embarked on the search for a technology partner it could work with through its IT transformation.

Solution

- Consulting
- Data centre design and build
- Project Management
- Managed Network Services
- Communications links between customer and Sungard AS technology centres
- Dual-site colocation
- Equipment Management
- TeleVault data backup
- Managed Internet
- Managed Firewall
- Managed Intrusion Detection Services
- Penetration Testing
- Workplace Recovery.

“Sungard AS demonstrated great maturity in being able to articulate and demonstrate their achievements and capabilities. We just felt more comfortable with them. Everything was right on paper but it was more intangible than that – Sungard AS came across as the ultimate professionals with first-class experience who would successfully meet our needs.”

Andrew Terry,
IT Manager,
SEGRO



*At 31 December 2014, SEGRO share £4.8 billion.



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“There’s a massive sense of achievement for everybody involved that we devised the right strategy, chose the right partner and delivered on time and under budget. We did what we said we’d do – move the business without anybody noticing.”

Andrew Terry,
 IT Manager,
 SEGRO

Business benefits

- Smooth data centre migration
- Resilient, robust solution ensures high availability of IT systems
- Business underpinned by firm foundations for future growth
- Frees in-house IT team to focus on higher value tasks
- Preserves IT department’s reputation for reliability.

He adds, “Sungard AS demonstrated great maturity in being able to articulate and demonstrate their achievements and capabilities. We just felt more comfortable with them. Everything was right on paper but it was more intangible than that – Sungard AS came across as the ultimate professionals with first-class experience who would successfully meet our needs.”

Andrew Terry notes, “The superb levels of customer service shown to us by Sungard AS made us feel valued and we knew that we were important.”

Sungard AS provided dual-site colocation and all associated documentation, a Managed Internet service together with communications links between the two data centres and SEGRO’s offices, data backup and server maintenance. For added security and resilience, SEGRO also commissioned several Sungard AS security services including Managed Firewall, Managed Intrusion Detection Services and Penetration Testing.

In the event that staff had to relocate during an incident, SEGRO contracted 100 Workplace Recovery seats in three Sungard AS locations.

Next, it was time to tackle the data centre move, which had to be seamless with no interruption to the business. The SEGRO IT team have an excellent reputation and did not want this to be tarnished by a failed IT project or service outage. Sungard AS took responsibility for project managing the migration process and, following a smooth implementation by a joint SEGRO/Sungard AS team, SEGRO’s data, systems and applications were transferred to one of Sungard AS’s highly resilient technology centres. The old Manchester data centre was then decommissioned.

This was a massive undertaking, which SEGRO’s Group HR Director Liz Reilly described as being “akin to travelling down the motorway at full speed whilst changing the engine.”

A relieved Andrew Terry reports, “There were a couple of minor things that weren’t working properly on the Monday morning – the room booking system, some browser warnings and WiFi in one office not working temporarily – but nothing that took more than an hour to fix.”



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“I’m pleased to say that we completed the move on time with very little disruption to services. This may be the biggest project you (hopefully) didn’t notice. I’d like to thank Andrew Terry and our partners at Sungard AS for designing and delivering such a critical and low-impact project.”

James Power,
 Head of Business Information Systems
 and Risk Management,
 SEGRO

This was hugely reassuring to SEGRO as the systems migrated support the majority of the company’s essential systems including email, business intelligence and its HR and finance systems. Most importantly, SEGRO’s staff and customers were blissfully unaware. Immediately after the move, SEGRO’s Head of Business Information Systems and Risk Management James Power said, “I’m pleased to say that we completed the move on time with very little disruption to services. This may be the biggest project you (hopefully) didn’t notice. I’d like to thank Andrew Terry and our partners at Sungard AS for designing and delivering such a critical and low-impact project.”

Scale of the migration

- Took 815 person-hours over 43 working days
- Included 180 hours at weekends and at night
- Involved 122 virtual servers being moved, reconfigured or built from scratch
- Six physical servers and a videoconferencing hub moved between data centres
- 20 terabytes of data moved
- 145 pieces of infrastructure equipment at 13 sites reconfigured
- 13 major network circuit changes made
- Everyone’s H: drive, S: drive, email account and remote access connection migrated.

About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services provides managed IT services, information availability consulting services, business continuity management software, and disaster recovery services. To learn more, visit www.sungardas.co.uk or call 0800 143 413

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