

## COLT delivers flexible data network for Colliers CRE



**Client:**  
Colliers CRE

**Sector:**  
Real Estate

**Business:**  
Real estate consultancy services

**Challenge:**  
Supporting business expansion with a more flexible network and a more rigorous approach to business continuity

**Services used:**  
IP VPN MPLS, co-location

As an expanding real estate firm, Colliers CRE needed a flexible data network to grow with the business and a more rigorous business continuity solution. It turned to COLT to deliver an IP VPN MPLS network and a back-up site for its UK operations.

The Colliers CRE Group is one of the UK's leading real estate advisers - and in the top 10 for turnover and market share. It provides a broad range of real estate consultancy services to both UK and international clients, delivered through specialist sector or service line teams that work together to provide an integrated service. Colliers CRE has 22 offices in the UK with further operations in Spain and Ireland.

### Business challenge

Colliers CRE has been expanding rapidly over the past few years through a mixture of organic and acquisition growth. With the acquisition of a number of new sites, each with its own legacy communications systems in place, the IT director, Perry Willis, needed to rationalise a jumble of old MPLS, hub and spoke and leased lines. He decided to move to a single, more flexible network that would allow the organisation to connect new sites very quickly and easily as it expanded. At the same time, Colliers CRE needed a solution that would allow employees to transfer large volumes of data between offices including drawings and photographs – essential tools of the trade for the property market.

### Why COLT?

Following a competitive tender, Colliers CRE selected COLT to roll out an IP VPN MPLS network across all its UK sites. The company chose COLT for its high capacity fibre network and its ability to provide sophisticated monitoring tools that are used to track traffic across the network.

### Benefiting from MPLS

With its ability to prioritise traffic, COLT's MPLS network has enabled Colliers CRE to roll out video conferencing across all the sites so that employees can cut down on time spent out of the office travelling to external meetings. Colliers CRE has also become a heavy user of Citrix applications which rely on the low latency offered by the COLT MPLS network to run smoothly.

### Strengthening business continuity

When it came to renewing its contract with COLT, Colliers CRE decided to strengthen its business continuity planning. The company holds significant amounts of commercial, legal and client data and so it is of the utmost importance that its communication network is designed to withstand any potential disasters.





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IT Director, Colliers CRE

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Historically, Colliers CRE back up data centre was located very close to its main facility. Willis decided to move the back up site further away to COLT's data centre, located west of London. Colliers CRE is also now running the company's storage area network from this data centre. Additionally, Colliers CRE now has secondary lines to each of its sites within the UK. The smaller offices have back-up ISDN lines and COLT has put in place a regular testing schedule.

Willis commented, “ISDN lines are notorious for failing to work if they're not used on an ongoing basis. COLT came up with the idea of implementing a regular testing schedule to ensure they are in working order.”

#### What's next?

Colliers CRE now has a more robust disaster recovery strategy in place and a data network it can rely on to support its business both now and as it expands further. In the past year alone, it has added five new sites to the network. The next step is to add voice to the MPLS network. According to Willis, this is not far down the line:

“Colliers CRE is a fast moving company and as an IT function, we need to react very quickly to the demands of the business. We need a network partner who can support us and COLT delivers very well.

“The next step is to get more value out of our MPLS network. Now that we have bolstered our business continuity planning and we are connected into COLT's data centres, we are in a good position to start using voice over IP as well.”