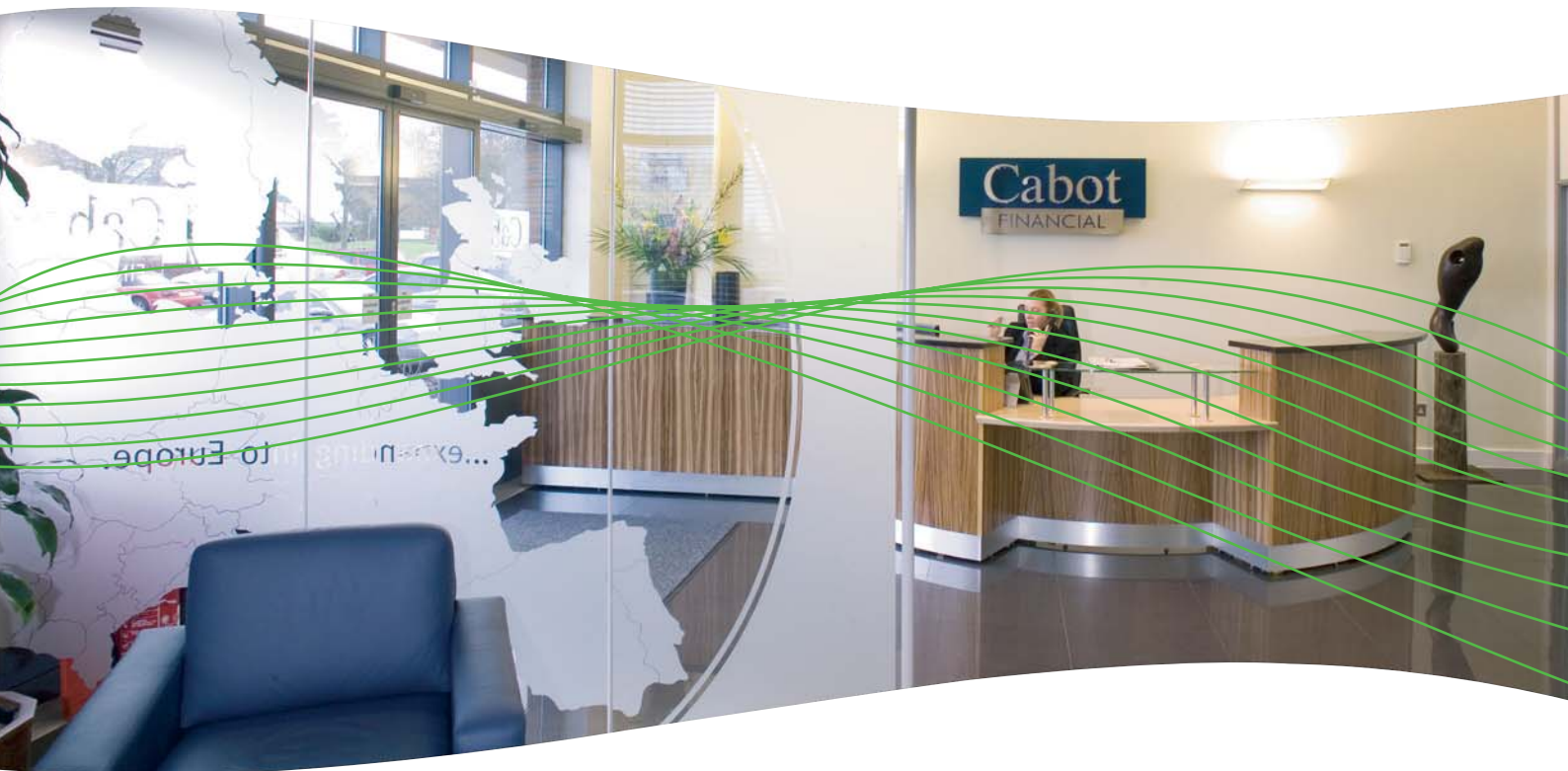




HP ProCurve Networking

HP ProCurve, the Network of Choice for Cabot Financial



“HP ProCurve gave us the perfect price/performance ratio for our budget. Compared with Cisco, we saved a great deal on the cost of our new network and on top of that, ProCurve comes with a free lifetime warranty*.”

**Bernie Burdett
IT director
Cabot Financial
United Kingdom**

Cabot Financial is the pioneer and market leader for consumer debt purchase and collection in the UK. Formed in 1998, it has acquired portfolios from among the biggest names in UK consumer finance including HBOS, RBS, Barclays, Capital One, MBNA and Citigroup.

Cabot has a current headcount of 350 that is forecast to grow to 450 in the next two years, and to accommodate this growth it recently moved into a new £5 million building. The purpose-built headquarters came with many state-of-the-art facilities but a major advantage was the opportunity to leave behind an unsuitable old network and to install a completely new one based on an HP ProCurve Networking solution.

“We used to have a hybrid network with a mix of Nortel and Baystack. Rather than chassis-based units, it was composed of single units that had been bolted on over time as the company had grown,” says Cabot IT director, Bernie Burdett. “Network management had become a nightmare. The ports were all linked together but if one went down, it would bring down other units on that segment. We would also get bottlenecks on the network and we were at a loss to find out what was causing the problem. The only way we could manage this was to take down each switch until we found the culprit. That had to be done out of hours and users just had to put up with a slow network, which obviously had negative impacts on our business.”

Business benefits

- Cabot saved on the initial cost of its new network when compared with Cisco and will benefit from ProCurve’s leading lifetime warranty.*
- Having a faster and more reliable network gives business continuity and staff better support in their debt collection work, making the company more successful and profitable.
- ProCurve’s modular chassis design offers built-in expandability and flexibility to support future business growth.

Business critical

Cabot would find it impossible to trade without its network, which carries the vital CRM system and databases that enable staff to contact customers and collect payments. It is also crucial for 90 per cent of the staff to constantly access Cabot’s debt management system.

Determined to get it right with the new network, Cabot considered proposals from HP ProCurve, Cisco and 3Com. Its final choice was ProCurve, based not only on its quality of technology and price/performance, but also on the knowledgeable and helpful attitude of the ProCurve representatives.

Business continuity and network security

Cabot’s new network is based around ProCurve 5400 switches, particularly the 5412zl, and is designed to support high business continuity and network security. There are two main server rooms which provide failover in the event of downtime. There are also a number of hub rooms and each hub is a Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN), so if one part of the building goes down, it does not affect others. For even greater resilience, the network also has a number of fibre connections, multi-linking back into different ports which was easily and cost effectively achieved with ProCurve’s flexible switch design.

“ProCurve were head and shoulders above the competition as far as price/performance is concerned and we were attracted by the fact that the technology comes with a free

Objective

- When Cabot Financial moved into a new £5 million building, the installation of a resilient, purpose built network was a business priority.

Approach

- After considering both Cisco and 3Com, Cabot decided to implement an HP ProCurve Networking solution based on a better price/performance ratio.
- Based on ProCurve 5400 switches, the network is segmented into Virtual Local Area Networks (VLAN) and includes resilient fibre multi-linking back into different ports in the same unit.
- ProCurve has also been implemented at the company’s new Dublin base and will be the default choice for European expansion plans.

IT improvements

- This 10Gb, future-proof solution includes triple-speed PoE to the desktop, facilitating the future introduction of VoIP and wireless services.
- The whole network design, including VLANs, provides greater business resilience.
- ProCurve Manager Plus enables Cabot to pinpoint problems more quickly and efficiently and will simplify overall network management.

lifetime warranty*,” adds Burdett. “Also, our contact at ProCurve was very, very helpful and I had not experienced this from a manufacturer before. He made suggestions and adjustments to my designs and I was reassured by the fact that ProCurve had more or less ratified our network, even though they were still not sure they would get the order.

“Not only was the ProCurve price highly competitive, but when I did more research I realised that, with the competition, I would be paying more for technologies that were no better than ProCurve in terms of performance and clearly would not be appropriate for our business.”

Cabot is now able to benefit from triple-speed Power over Ethernet (PoE) enabled to the desktop. This 10Gb solution provides the convergence future-proofing the organisation needs to develop Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and wireless services. VoIP from Avaya is now being rolled out in stages within Cabot’s premises. It is currently deployed purely to back office staff as a learning experience before it is rolled out to the call centre. Next on the Cabot agenda is wireless deployment, for which the infrastructure is already in place.

Efficient network management

“We are now able to increase the size of the network without compromising the base infrastructure. If I employ another 50 people then I’ll just install another ProCurve 5412 with the appropriate modules,” says Burdett. “We can prioritise bandwidth to key users and servers, and the ProCurve Manager Plus software that comes with ProCurve has made it much easier for us to diagnose where bottlenecks may be coming from. We now have the ability to control the network centrally and can monitor its performance to ensure maximum uptime. As we get more experience with the software, we will certainly be able to diagnose issues much more quickly and get a faster resolution, which is good for the business.

“We always want to give our customers a quality service, so when staff are talking to customers they need the information at their fingertips. We don’t want any of our account officers having to ask customers to wait because our systems are running slowly – with ProCurve technology this doesn’t happen any more. Our challenge now is to keep up-to-date with just what the ProCurve network can do,” concludes Burdett.

ProCurve is now Cabot’s corporate choice for networking. It was installed when the company recently opened in Dublin and will be the default networking solution for future expansion into Europe.

Customer at a Glance

Industry sector: Financial services
Name: Cabot Financial
Headquarters: West Malling, Kent, UK
Telephone: +44 (0)1732 524706
Number of employees: 350
URL: www.cabotfinancial.com

What Makes it Work?

Primary hardware

- ProCurve Switch 5412zl

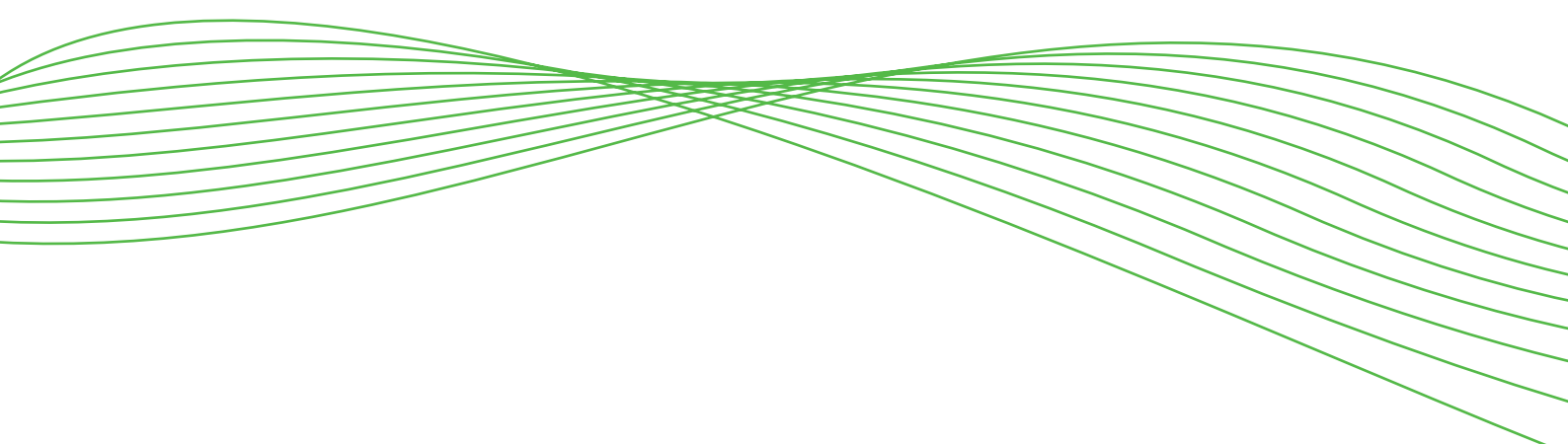
Primary software

- ProCurve Manager Plus

To find out more about ProCurve Networking please visit:
www.procurve.eu

For information about the ProCurve Network Design Centre, visit:
www.hp.com/go/requestyournetworkdesign

***For as long as you own the product, with next-business-day advance replacement (available in most countries). The following hardware products and their related family modules have a one-year warranty with extensions available: The ProCurve Routing Switch 9300m Series, ProCurve Switch 8100fl Series, ProCurve Access Control Server 745wl and the ProCurve Network Access Controller 800. Stand-alone software may have a different warranty duration. For details, refer to the ProCurve Software Licence, Warranty and Support booklet at www.procurve.eu/warranty**



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