



Hill & Stewart may sell technology off the shelf, but they don't have to buy it that way.

These days we expect a high standard of customer service, but the fact that people continue to be surprised when they actually get it reminds us that it's perhaps not the basic housekeeping skill it ought to be.

Hill & Stewart 100% were certainly pleased enough by TelstraClear's initial response to their problems. By putting in a little extra thought and taking time to understand their business, TelstraClear was able to offer them a solution that proved to be the foundation of a great relationship.

Reliability and bandwidth problems were costing too much to solve.

As anyone who's bought an appliance in the greater Auckland area will tell you, Hill & Stewart are part of the 100% buying network. They have 12 stores and 108 sales staff from Albany to Pukekohe, all needing to stay in constant touch with the head office in St Lukes.

They came to TelstraClear with the usual mix of phones, faxes and EFTPOS in their stores. They'd been one of the first in New Zealand to use a Cisco Avvid Voice over IP (VoIP) system, but there were issues involving cost, reliability and bandwidth, so they resolved to do something about it.

Hill & Stewart's Financial Controller, Bruce Collins, needed a partner he thought would support them. Bruce was about to sign a contract with Telecom the next day, one that he wasn't particularly happy with.

Someone needed to give Hill & Stewart 100% an option.

"We needed a permanent connection from our head office to the stores, but Telecom wanted to sell us a 1Mb connection that was expensive and

Client: Hill & Stewart 100%, 12 stores from Albany to Pukekohe.

Business: Appliance retailer, member of the 100% buying group.

Problem: Inadequate bandwidth and service reliability, at a reasonable cost.

Solution: A Premium Gold frame relay with 256kbps connections to the stores and 2 x 2Mb connection to head office.

Outcome: An effective inter-store communication solution and guaranteed bandwidth.



too large for the business needs. The lowest they could go was 512k. It seemed the price was two or three times more than a 256k, so we were facing a substantial increase in our communications costs until TelstraClear put an innovative solution on the table.”

We had our thinking caps on right away. “TelstraClear spoke the right language,” claims Bruce. “They could explain the whole process and the fact is they fronted up with a solution that used some of Telecom’s technology that Telecom themselves didn’t know about.”

“Telecom’s only response was to lower the rates, the call charges, and in the end there was very little difference in price. The key was the approach from Telstra, who listened to the problem. They came up with the solution and they really did manage it well.”

A premium data solution was cost-effective, fast and future-proof.

What we offered Bruce was our Premium Gold Frame Relay. A 2 x 2Mbps connection to the head office and 256k to every store kept all Hill & Stewart’s communication costs within the company fixed. Best of all we could guarantee the bandwidth of that 256k link – there would never be less than that available. The system was future-proofed too, able to be bumped up to 1Mb without a change in hardware.

We signed a two-year contract and started implementing the changes. The whole concept was well managed, the Project Manager was superb and no one has ever regretted the move.

“We’re a seven day a week trader, we need to be up and running for a minimum of the trading hours of each day so the window of opportunity to switch was relatively tight and we needed that to be done reasonably quickly. Once the contract was signed everybody turned up when they said they would and it all went through.

More capacity, a more reliable service and no more call charges.

The new system gives Hill & Stewart 100% several advantages. Because they’re now on a private network calling costs are fixed, so no more toll calls between their Albany and Pukekohe stores. They run a proxy server in head office for the internet, a Cisco call manager phone system and Global, their point of sale software. All of that data that is travelling freely to and from the stores. What’s more their all important voice calls receive bandwidth priority. If lines become busy, internet usage drops off first.

But for Bruce, the attitude remained the most important thing. “From the start, a good relationship developed with TelstraClear. Their solution was innovative and the attitude was very good. They came up with a realistic answer, and that’s why they won our business.”

“The thing that always strikes me with technology, you think you’re spending a lot and you know it is a mountain to get over, but once you’re on the other side of it you never look back do you?”

For more information, call us on 0508 55 66 00 or visit www.telstraclear.co.nz

