

*Dynamic disruption
through applied innovation*

Investcorp Case Study:

**Counting the benefits of a PureEthernet
Transatlantic Connection**

"Having someone answer the phone and fix the fault whilst you were on the phone was customer service that I had never seen before from a Telco provider."



Exponential-e - the UK's thought leader in Ethernet-based WAN solutions

Investcorp is a leading provider and manager of alternative investment products. It has offices in New York, London and Bahrain and is publicly traded on the London Stock Exchange and Bahrain Stock Exchange. The firm has five lines of business: private equity, real estate, hedge funds, venture capital and Gulf growth capital. Founded in 1982, Investcorp has grown to become one of the largest and most diverse alternative investment managers in terms of both product offerings and geography, and currently has over \$10 billion in invested assets under management.

Timely and reliable communication between its offices in New York, London and Bahrain is vital to service delivery to its clients and business partners. In addition, as a firm in the financial sector on three continents, Investcorp must have an accurate backup system and disaster recovery capability in place in order to comply with regulatory guidelines.

Requirements

While Investcorp had an existing business continuity solution, it was investigating ways to reduce the man hours involved with its current tape backup system, limit the associated costs and reduce restore times. It was also aiming to improve Disaster Recovery (DR) capabilities and reduce the chances of error within the backup data. While disk to disk based backup solutions met 50% of that requirement, the firm also needed to be able to store the data safely offsite as well as improve its DR capabilities. Investcorp therefore decided to utilise its existing investment in transatlantic offices and host copies of the replicated data in both sites.

Having selected Softek's real-time replication software, the firm had to ensure there was enough high quality transatlantic connectivity between its offices. There needed to be adequate bandwidth not only to accommodate the data replication, but also to ensure that there would be no impact or degradation on its existing inter-office services, which included voice and video.

Out With the Old

Investcorp had recently installed a 5Mb Ethernet link between its London and New York offices specifically to enable the firm to benefit from advanced services such as voice and

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video over IP. This had replaced a 1Mb AT&T leased line which, while the quality had been fine, it was simply too expensive to upgrade to the necessary bandwidth to run such services.

The move from a traditional leased line to Ethernet WAN connectivity had been advised by Exponential-e, who at the time was providing Investcorp with its Internet connectivity.

Mike Simatos, Head of IT, Investcorp London, was totally confident in their knowledge and ability: "While Exponential-e won the Internet service on its competitive pricing, bandwidth and ease of upgrading to their service, they soon proved there was much more to them," he said.

Having been a little sceptical at the beginning, Investcorp ran Exponential-e's services in parallel for several months before cutting away from its existing Internet provider, PIPEX. It was during this time the two organisations forged their good working relationship.

*"Having someone answer the phone and fix the fault whilst we were on the phone was customer service that I had never seen before from a Telco provider and it was very welcome. It was primarily this level of customer service, plus their commitment to providing us with the latest technological services at competitive prices, that lead to us entrusting Exponential-e with the more important data links such as our WAN connectivity to New York". **Mike Simatos; Head of IT; Investcorp London.***

In With the New

Having discussed its requirements with Exponential-e, Investcorp purchased a 5Mb WAN connection between London and New York. They began to run Voice and Video over the connection which greatly reduced their telecom costs and led to increased use of video conferencing rather than travel to New York. This saved valuable time, as well as money.

Mike Simatos pointed out that there were initially some install delays and problems with reliability and throughput: "99% of the issues were outside the physical reach of

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Exponential-e and, had these problems been in the UK, I'm confident they would have been resolved a lot earlier." he said.

Having worked through the initial teething problems, and with a requirement for additional, resilient bandwidth, Exponential-e installed a 50mb transatlantic Ethernet link, with the original 5mb circuit being used as a 'failover' solution in case of emergencies. The 5Mb internet pipe in London, which started the successful working relationship between the two companies, also remains in use.

The Final Solution

"The large bandwidth and excellent response times now allow us to run VoIP from our PABX's which provides inter-site connectivity. In addition we use it for routing our video conference traffic (H323) between London and New York which enables us to provide higher bandwidth and greater stability".

With ample bandwidth there is currently no requirement for Investcorp to run QoS on the London New York link. Yet with plans underway to upgrade conferencing equipment to support High Definition Video, they may need to consider prioritising traffic when it is implemented, as HD VC has higher bandwidth requirements. This won't be a problem however, as Exponential-e already offers QoS across its network.

The Final Word

The link has proved fundamental to Investcorp's successful and award-winning business continuity solution. The new link enabled Investcorp to achieve all it required from a business continuity solution and gave them the ability to host more VoIP and Video Conferencing.

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