



Health manufacturer makes huge cost savings by preventing downtime using Paessler PRTG

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Jamie Hamblin
IT Manager
Lanes Health

Lanes Health is the manufacturer behind UK pharmaceutical, natural remedy and functional confectionery brands such as Olbas Oil, Jakemans and Kalms. The company employs 190 people across its two locations in Gloucester and Lincolnshire.

As with any office, IT enables the company's workforce to do their jobs, but in addition to this the company's ability to manufacture its product is wholly dependent on the availability of its IT. Any unexpected production downtime impacts directly on the business' revenue, with outages costing the company in excess of £50,000 per day due to damaged products and through lost staff output. In 2012, the company therefore decided to invest in a network monitoring solution to enable continuous production at the company's two factories.

To monitor the network, the IT team had previously been using System Center Essentials, which required regular maintenance and only monitored Windows-based software. The solution was unreliable, with alerts to problems in the network arriving after the event had happened or in some cases never at all. “In our IT environment, we didn't know if our switches and servers were up or down! This situation became more and more untenable for us,” says Jamie Hamblin, IT Manager at Lanes Health.



www.laneshealth.com

Looking for the perfect match

Before choosing PRTG, Jamie and Director of Business Information Systems Mark Elton explored competitor solutions, such as Solar Winds and found that the alternatives were too complex, potentially requiring a reconfiguration of the network, or involving high costs. Jamie Hamblin explains, “Our value added reseller Trust Systems Ltd recommended and demonstrated PRTG, which they use themselves. It was priced at the right level and it didn’t require the enormous investment that other providers require.”

“We were also impressed by the speed in which PRTG is developed, with new features and sensors constantly being added. We trust the advice and the value added support of Trust Systems and are grateful that they have matched us up with the right tool for our needs.”

Introducing PRTG

At Lanes Health, PRTG has been set up as a single installation on a virtual machine (VM) and monitors the status of all switches and servers, using VMWare sensors for ESXi. The team have configured the software to do the monitoring with 1,342 WMI and SNMP sensors and they also use PRTG to monitor the status of some older devices that do not support SNMP monitoring, such as the telephone system.

In particular, the IT team were impressed by the simple installation process and the auto-discovery element of the software. “PRTG found everything that needed to be monitored on installation and has fitted our needs pretty much out of the box, so there has been no need to customise the software,” says Jamie Hamblin. The team managed the installation themselves and Mark adds that a real selling point was that he didn’t have to dedicate a member of staff for two to three weeks to set it up.

No more downtime

To monitor the systems, the team use the Windows GUI as well as the web interface and for out-of-hours monitoring, they utilise the PRTG iPhone app.

Since adopting PRTG, the system at Lanes Health has not experienced any downtime, with problems being fixed before they become an issue. In particular, the IT team have been informed of issues with hard drives, server up or downtime and when a switch loses power in part of the buildings. “PRTG provides us with daily checks to make sure everything is working as it should and we are alerted before a problem escalates and affects our users,” explains Jamie Hamblin.

PRTG has also enabled the IT department to make further improvements to the company’s systems. As a result of using PRTG, new servers have been implemented with different HDD configurations, old switches have been replaced, and the company has fully migrated to a virtualised environment.

About Trust Systems

Trust Systems Ltd based in Ewen, Gloucestershire is a valued partner of Paessler since 2009.

They consult their customers on selecting, evaluating and implementing various desktop, storage, network and security solutions of industry leading vendors.

Trust Systems understands that the business is ALL about people, whether it is the team at Trust, the suppliers, partners or customers. The core values that they believe help guide them on the way are Trust, Respect, Understanding, Service and Training.



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Paying for itself many times over

For the company, the cost-savings are multiple and it says that it has been able to recover the initial investment within just two hours of continuous production. “When you take into account the downtime that has been avoided, PRTG has already paid for itself many times over, considering that a day without production may cost us 10s of thousands of pounds of revenue. We actually made the money for the license back on the first avoidance of downtime,” says Mark. Lanes Health can not only pride itself on an excellent ROI but has also saved on staff costs; systems monitoring used to be one person’s full-time job but Mark explains that with PRTG they are able to manage the network within their current capacity, offering the IT team more time to focus on other tasks.

In addition to the financial benefits, the IT department has also gained an improved reputation within the company. As Mark explains, “Previously, if something was broken it could take a day to fix because it was unexpected. Since we started using PRTG that has become a thing of the past. It is rare that something breaks and has an effect as we are now able to plan replacement/fixes out before they have become an issue.”

Future proofing Lanes Health

Looking to the future, PRTG has also provided the company with an opportunity to future-proof its systems as the business grows. “As a result of the improvements PRTG has brought to the infrastructure of our business, we are now in a position where we can expand more easily,” says Jamie. “If we were to start using Cloud-hosted solutions, for example, we are now perfectly placed to monitor them using PRTG.”

The IT department is currently updating PRTG for live monitor screens and additional alerts and log-ins, moving to constant monitoring and improved awareness via audible alerts. This will assist them in their system monitoring as the company moves to a real-time environment, and set them up for the future – whatever it brings.

About Paessler AG

Paessler AG leads the industry in providing the most powerful, affordable and easy-to-use network monitoring and testing solutions. The company's suite of just-right software products deliver peace of mind, confidence and convenience for businesses of all sizes – from Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) to large enterprises, including more than 70% of the Fortune 100 companies. Based in Nuremberg, Germany, Paessler's global reach includes more than 150,000 active installations of its products. Founded in 1997, Paessler AG remains a privately held company and is recognized as both a member of the Cisco Developer Network and a VMware Technology Alliance Partner.

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