



**Nothing mysterious
in Softcat's
approach to IT
supply – just
straight forward
good service**

Founded in the late 1980s by Chairman Nigel Cook, Douglas Stafford is recognised as an industry leader in evaluating the performance of business through Mystery Shopping, Training, Client Satisfaction Analysis and in providing the solutions and know-how to improve it.

Douglas Stafford's bespoke research and training programmes are tailored to each client's specific requirements with the clear objective of making real improvements in customer satisfaction and sales performance. These services have created winning performance for businesses across a wide range of market sectors, from automotive to retail, property, finance and leisure.

Based in Portsmouth, Douglas Stafford has a sixty strong head office team and a dedicated national field research and training team, who utilise their wealth of experience to provide clients with valuable performance data and improvement training. Douglas Stafford's clients include Bose, BMW, the Volkswagen Group, French Connection and many other major, well known brands.



PROJECT PROFILE:

- Licensing
- Virtualisation
- Security
- Storage

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Some 3 years ago, Douglas Stafford decided to rationalise its Microsoft software licensing policies. "We had invested heavily in Microsoft Office and Windows Server products, and were planning additional expenditure so wanted to see whether we could benefit from economies of scale," explained Peter Jackson, Douglas Stafford's IT System Administrator. "We also wanted to ensure that we were fully compliant with Microsoft's licensing policies."

Peter researched the channel to identify an organisation that would be able to provide assistance and was impressed with the track-record that Softcat had earned in providing similar services to other organisations. "On the face of it, Softcat seemed ideal," continued Peter.

"They had the experience and from my initial conversations with them, they give me the confidence that I needed in commissioning them to review our overall software licensing policies and procedures."

In addition to being one of a very small number of Microsoft UK LARs (Large Account Resellers) which enables a direct trading relationship with Microsoft and direct access to all the licence ordering, management and provisioning systems, Softcat is also one of the largest suppliers of Microsoft software licensing to the UK corporate mid market tier (companies with up to 1,500 desktops), with specialisations in SAM and licensing disciplines.

Having undertaken a detailed analysis of Douglas Stafford's Microsoft solutions, Softcat were able to recommend an alternative licensing strategy - one based on an annual subscription agreement - which fulfilled Peter's two key objectives - reduced upfront licensing costs and ensuring the peace of mind that his business was fully compliant Purchasing Software Assurance also meant that Douglas Stafford was entitled to the latest software releases going forward.

After the successful conclusion of the licensing project, and having built a trusted relationship, Peter looked to Softcat for other services that they provided. "We were planning to upgrade and increase our server farm as part of our on-going virtualisation project," said Peter. "We standardise on Dell equipment and asked Softcat whether they could help in obtaining the additional servers that we needed."

As a part of its standard services, Softcat evaluated Douglas Stafford's objectives and put forward their proposal, still based on Dell which would give the organisation increased flexibility for future expansion.

"Not only did Softcat suggest a solution that would better support our long-term growth, their relationship meant that they were also able to obtain the Blade servers at a price far more competitive than that which Dell themselves had offered us," commented Peter.

Douglas Stafford now regards Softcat as its strategic partner for its hardware and software requirements. "It is obviously advantageous to place the sourcing of hardware and software with a single organisation," added Peter. "But Softcat goes much further than that. They provide valuable advice and suggest alternatives that are often more cost-effective and efficient. They really understand our business."

The partnership between Douglas Stafford and Softcat continues to grow. Currently Douglas Stafford is looking to implement a business continuity solution as well as enhance its existing security infrastructure. Softcat's specialist Storage and Security teams are working closely with Douglas Stafford's IT team to identify the solutions that will deliver the required combinations of capability, flexibility and cost-effectiveness.

"Throughout our entire working relationship, Softcat has been the ideal partner," concluded Peter.

"They have been integral to the development of the company over the past few years and have never failed to deliver sound objective advice, as well as the hardware and software that is best suited to our long term requirements."

"I have been very impressed with their helpfulness. They maintain regular contact with us and respond very quickly to all of our requests. I receive numerous approaches from competitive organisations looking to win some of our business but Softcat is a fantastic and vital resource and will remain our strategic partner of choice for the future."