



## Building a modern efficient data center

EDF Trading is a major player in energy with a highly successful business strategy. The London based company trades actively in the fast-moving international wholesale energy markets, buying and selling electricity, emissions, natural gas, coal, freight, biomass and oil.

The world's energy markets operate 24 hours a day, every day, without a break, which means that EDF Trading's IT systems must be robust and completely reliable. Time is money in the energy trading business, so not only is any service down-time unacceptable, but high performance is also necessary to deliver the level of responsiveness demanded by the company's traders.

It has been the policy at EDF Trading to refresh its IT infrastructure every three years in order to respond to growth and maintain the competitive service

levels required by the business. With hundreds of desktops involved, implementing any upgrade without disrupting critical operations would be challenging enough, but this time the company faced an additional obstacle.

EDF Trading's London offices, which also housed its data centre, had simply run out of electrical capacity and could not support any further growth. For this reason, EDF Trading decided to move to more modern premises and take the opportunity to install a new, up-to-date infrastructure that would meet the company's future IT needs at the same time.

Responsibility for getting the new data centre implemented fell to Wai Chui, Manager of Infrastructure at EDF Trading, who proceeded to put together a system specification for the tendering process that would be used to select a suitable supplier.

### PROJECT PROFILE:

- Infrastructure refresh
- Symantec backup
- Citrix application delivery solutions
- HP blade technology
- Server consolidation through virtualisation using VMware software

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In addition to the functional requirements for application support, the new configuration had to meet stringent targets for energy conservation, ease of management and performance.

A complete refresh of the desktop systems for the trading floor was also included, together with new, colour-coordinated monitors designed to present a professional image. The overall system specification was both large and complex, featuring backup systems from Symantec using HP tape devices, application delivery solutions from Citrix and WAN acceleration from Riverbed.

“Our challenge was to find an IT partner that we could depend on, with the experience and knowledge to assist in the design, supply and ultimately to implement this ambitious new infrastructure,” observes Wai. “The large scale of the configuration and the fact that a tight relocation schedule was involved meant that project management capability would be crucial and, of course, the price had to be right.”

The solution defined by Wai and his team made extensive use of advanced blade technology, housed in water-cooled racks, to optimise the use of space and power, plus server consolidation through virtualisation using VMware software. “As Softcat had very high levels of knowledge around the technologies involved, its consultants assisted us with the design and liaised with HP to provide us with the product information we needed, which was a great help,” says Wai.

Although Softcat was an existing supplier of IT equipment and services to the company, with such a large project, EDF Trading felt that a competitive tender approach was the best way to minimise risk and obtain the best value.

EDF Trading used a rigorous scoring procedure to evaluate the responses to the tender in terms of value for money, supplier capabilities and the quality of the approach to the project. Softcat emerged as the winner of this selection process with a well thought out methodology for execution and a highly competitive price.

**“This was a substantial undertaking for a supplier of Softcat’s size,” says Wai. “But our past experience with its services had been very favourable. Our Account Management had proved to be trustworthy and knowledgeable, and Softcat assured us that they would be using the same team that we had come to know and trust for this project.”**

To ensure that the immovable relocation deadline was safely achieved, Softcat made use of third party pre-staging facilities where the 172 HP blade servers, 160 plus workstations and 500 monitors could be assembled and checked, well ahead of time for the move. The use of a separate location for system set up was pivotal to the success of the exercise, as there was only a small window of time when the new data centre would be available for access before the go-live date.

**“Careful planning and preparation by Softcat, together with meticulous attention to detail, was key to the smooth execution of the project,” reports Wai. “Delivery and installation of the huge quantity of equipment were completed on schedule and the move to the new building was accomplished with no unexpected disruption to the business. The project was a considerable undertaking for all involved and Softcat’s planning, experience and relationships paid dividends when it came to meeting and exceeding our expectations.”**

EDF Trading is delighted with its new data centre, which has fully met the objectives of the exercise. The move was completed on time and the new systems have proved robust and trouble-free. In addition, the trading staff greatly appreciate the improvement in throughput and responsiveness they have gained.

The business benefits through increased productivity and greater manageability have been considerable, plus power and cooling costs have been significantly reduced – a major priority for EDF Trading.

A further benefit to EDF Trading is that, with Softcat, it now has an IT partner with a proven relationship and a thorough understanding of its computing environment and business needs.

**“We feel we get a better, more responsive service from Softcat than we would from a larger service provider,” says Wai. “Our Account Management team are always accessible and helpful, and they have shown that they can manage the largest projects successfully.”**