



GRAND DESIGNS



How Information Technology has made a vital contribution to the success of one Kent business.

Based in Maidstone, Rap Interiors is an award winning design, refurbishment and fit-out contractor. We asked Design Director Julie Anderson about the role of Information Technology in the business.

Tell us a little about the work that Rap Interiors does.

Our job is to help other businesses thrive by creating inspirational and efficient workspaces. Whether they want us to fit out or refurbish an office, school or care home, we have to ensure we offer the best design and deliver the project on time.

"CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO OUR SUCCESS"

You've recently received a major award for "Best Office Design UK", so Rap is clearly a leading company in your industry. What part has Information Technology played in your success?

I.T. is everything! From the specialist design software, right through to the way we use the standard office communication tools - technology gives us an edge.

With Skype, e-mail, and remote working we can keep the business running wherever we are. Our world has changed drastically, and that increased use of technology means it is even more critical that our systems are always available.

"EXCELLENT SUPPORT FROM JJSYSTEMS"

What would a major failure in your systems mean for your business?

It could be devastating. But more importantly, it can dramatically affect our clients' businesses. They are dependent on us to deliver new workspaces, if we don't do that on time their business just can't operate.

"THE COST AND EFFICIENCY SAVINGS ARE INVALUABLE"

With IT playing such an important part in your operation, how have you gone about managing the systems and support in the company?



In the past, we simply had an appointed "I.T. person" in the business. They weren't necessarily an I.T. expert, just someone we could shout for when things went wrong. Perhaps not the best option, but we all start out in business and learn to improve as we go.

So as the company began to grow, you decided to look at other options?

Yes, it soon became apparent that some form of managed I.T. support services might help with our growth - that's when we began to work with JJ Systems. Since then we haven't looked back. Now if something goes wrong, our problems are resolved on average within 15 minutes of being reported. All of which happens with the minimum of fuss and minimal disruption to the business.

“SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TO OUR PRODUCTIVITY”

Has there been any other impact on the business since you started to use managed IT services?

We've seen an overall improvement in our performance as a team. Our staff can focus on serving our customers without being distracted by frustrating I.T. problems. With proactive support, our computer issues have virtually been banished, and our machines now run efficiently, making a significant difference to our productivity.

“WE HAVEN'T LOOKED BACK”

Key to the success of your business is your ability to create inspiring designs for your clients. Does your use of managed services have any impact here?

We use amazing software to create incredible designs for our clients. It's important to us that they feel inspired by what we show them so that they can make informed decisions on the look and layout of their new workspace. Now we can e-mail them a remote login and show them the designs, without the need for them to leave their offices.

Of course, the use of digital communications brings risks regarding efficient usage and security. What's your strategy?

We believe it's essential to educate all staff on the correct use of e-mail and the internet. This knowledge has been a contributing factor to our success. Having a support partner such as JJ Systems, who offer excellent tutorials and sound security guidance, has been invaluable.

“SIMPLY COULD NOT LIVE WITHOUT”

With your success being so dependent on IT, what other steps have you taken to ensure you can keep the business running?

We can sleep at night knowing that our data is backed up and our server has full offsite replication. We have a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, meaning that with the help of JJ Systems we can easily transfer our office operation. All of which means we keep running, even if we experience a devastating fire or flood.

The cost and efficiency savings are invaluable, but I'd go further. Managed I.T. is something we simply could not live without in the business.

