



Building a solid foundation in the Cloud.

**NZ Flooring specialist invests
in IT infrastructure to support
rapid growth.**



Quality flooring for 45 years

Established in 1969, Gilt Edge Industries is a specialist manufacturer, distributor and consultant for flooring preparation and installation products in New Zealand.

In addition to having a manufacturing base in the country, Gilt Edge offers a wide array of local and imported products, tools and machinery that cater to all areas of the flooring industry. The company has seven trade stores throughout the North and South Islands as well as a large manufacturing and bulk storage facility in Christchurch. Customers can shop in all the main centres and all deliveries are traced to meet the customers' demands of delivery on the same or next day, virtually anywhere in the country.

Growth pains

The rapid growth, while welcome, brought with it challenges for the company's aging IT infrastructure. "We were growing at a considerable rate and we were having significant performance issues with the IT vendors we were using at the time. Given the size and demands of the business and its requirements of being flexible, we were not offered any advice about what our options were. Even the issues that we did raise, took a long time to be resolved", says Nick Richardson, General Manager at Gilt Edge Industries. The company didn't have any internal IT staff and was dealing with two different vendors for IT (hardware) support and software service.

"We weren't having a lot of success with the previous suppliers, the all-round performance and the quality of service was extremely poor. Their approach was not solution driven at all."

Nick enquired through his network of friends, business owners and professionals in similar sized companies throughout New Zealand. "We wanted to work with an IT company that wouldn't treat us as just another number. It was the CEO of Bostik New Zealand who recommended LANWorx to us."

The brief to the LANWorx team was simple – "Take care of our IT and let us focus on our core business".

A Question of business continuity

The LANWorx team was brought in to take care of the IT infrastructure at Gilt Edge, while the business was growing rapidly. Soon after the Christchurch earthquakes struck, which made the offices and the servers they housed, inaccessible.

"Nick asked us to do an analysis and present him with the expenses involved in replacing the existing equipment with a cloud based solution", says Mark Battershill, Director at LANWorx.

From the perspective of business continuity, disaster recovery and return on investment, it was a straightforward decision.

"We had LANWorx have a good hard look at the way we did business. They had to do all the due diligence and look at our entire operation, what we wanted, where we were going, understanding it and coming with solutions. It was a very pleasant experience, they were responsive, attentive and analytical", says Nick.

While the senior leadership at Gilt Edge understood the costs and business implications of their IT systems, they did not want to get caught up in the details involved in execution of the project.

"They (the LANWorx team) managed to put into good layman terms exactly what they were going to deliver and gave us a fundamental understanding of how the solution would work and how that makes sense in terms of the costs involved."

"The decision to move was straightforward, however transitioning the data from physical servers in Christchurch to data centres located around the country was a technical challenge, but we completed the transition, with zero disruption to the users at Gilt Edge", says Chris Hoffmann, Senior Technical Consultant at LANWorx who worked on the project.



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Cloud infrastructure gives flexibility and scalability

The movement to a cloud based infrastructure has granted scalability to the IT infrastructure that is now keeping pace with the growth of the business requirements. "Gilt Edge recently acquired a couple of businesses and this centralised IT has given them immense flexibility to ramp up their operations as the business grows", Chris says.

Nick agrees, "They understand the pressures our business is under. We bought a new business three months ago and we had to turnkey that and mesh it with our current business, on really short notice – it was three weeks and they nailed it! We just had to go live on a certain date and they worked round the clock to setup an entirely new IT and phone network and turned it live for that new business and integrated it with our current business at the same time. That was pretty impressive."

Consolidating IT services

Before Gilt Edge engaged LANWorx, there were different suppliers for different aspects of the IT, networking and telephony, with which came the characteristic complexity in dealing with incompatible systems and vendors. "LANWorx is now the complete and absolute IT team for them", notes Mark Battershill.

Since the first engagement, LANWorx has taken over all IT, telephony and networking needs of the business. Mark says, "We've got end to end visibility of the company's entire network, so whenever there is an issue, there is no ambiguity about where the fault is, there aren't multiple vendors to deal with and point fingers at. Issues which would otherwise take three to four weeks to resolve are sorted within hours".

Risk aversion coupled with prudent spending

Given how important the IT systems are to Gilt Edge's nation-wide operations, the management was not taking any chances with the quality of service. "I'd agree that LANWorx's approach is quite risk averse", says Nick.

"They have a set plan for the costs of servicing the account rather than an hourly rate. I chose one of the higher grade plans which paid off very well within the first year. Whatever little issues that cropped up with the hardware didn't affect us at all because we were covered by the monthly plan and that paid huge dividends."

Nick appreciates the access he has to the senior technical time at LANWorx any time he calls on them. "Our relationship with LANWorx has developed very well over the past five years and if I ever need direct access to their team, I have it. I'm not put in a queue."

Developing a successful IT vendor relationship

For other organisations facing the same issues Gilt Edge did a few years ago, Nick has well-meant advice. "If you do these two things, you will always get a good result.

- i. When dealing with an IT vendor, talk to the decision maker face to face. You have to have access to their senior team and not be kept at arm's length. The business leader / owner has to take the initiative and talk to the senior team at the vendor's. The staff has a limited view on things, while you, the business owner can see the bigger picture and how things will work.
- ii. Ask for a testimonial. You want to be provided with some historical evidence of their ability to deal with similar sized companies. They must be able to provide you the option to speak with their other clients that they've worked with in the past. Speak to those companies about their experiences."

Nick says if another business sought his advice, he would have no qualms recommending LANWorx.

Reflecting on the time since LANWorx started working for Gilt Edge, Nick says, "our respective companies have grown together and really, they've kept pace with our growth. If they hadn't been able to keep up, we would have passed on them very quickly."

"It's not that they're invincible. Sometimes things don't go as planned, but it is their attitude towards their clients. They come with a sense of urgency and a desire understand the pressures our business is under and do everything they can to ease our issues. That's what sets them apart."

"In the end it's the people in the business that make a difference. If someone doesn't understand how important this service is to your business and how critical it is to get it right, you're probably dealing with the wrong company."

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General Manager, Gilt Edge Industries.

About LANWorx

LANWorx is an IT services company, providing the full range of software, hardware, system management services and strategic IT advice to SME organisations. We also provide ISP, Telephony and Unified Communication services to our customer base.

We help your organisation to be its best, by focusing on your core business at maximum productivity, while LANWorx ensures the right IT systems are always in place. This is based on our strong technical competence, a proactive and common-sense approach, and an absolute commitment to delivery.

We understand IT is a tool to help people do their job better, and that tool should be easy and painless to use. Our promise is always to put people before IT.

LANWorx. People before IT.

Contact us today for a chat about how we can put people before I.T. in your business.

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