

Intellect Broadband Campaign Case Study 2 – *InferMed*

Case Studies Demonstrating how SMEs in the ICT Sector are using Broadband
Campaign Sponsors: Intel Corporation (UK) Ltd



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Type and size of organisation

SME based in London providing health systems consultancy. 30 employees.

Description of Business

InferMed is a leading software supplier to the healthcare industry, helping it to bring products to the market faster, improve patient outcomes and assure successful, value-for-money treatments. It also provides the services needed to transfer the software successfully to the customers. Limited hosting of applications is also provided.

The range of products include MACRO, an advanced EDC solution for data capture of medical information in clinical research phase of drug development, AREZZO, a powerful clinical decision support technology for patient care and Clinical Gateway, for Oracle® Clinical users, which bridges the gap between MACRO and Oracle® Clinical. The software is constructed to strict guidelines set down by the US Food and Drugs Administration.

InferMed's business thus revolves around the collection and use of data to help inform better clinical decisions.

Remote workers / are all employees office based?

Many staff work from home where they have ADSL or Cable and dial in using VPN, including from Australia and France

Type of broadband connection (ADSL/Cable/Leased Line) and length of time connected

We have ADSL since 2002. Before that we had leased line, which provided the same functionality.

Are you using any associated technology? (wireless, etc)

Not at the moment.

Benefits of using Broadband

- Broadband is fundamental to our function since it is the main channel for our activity is as much as the internet, or at least email is fundamental. Broadband enables us to send and receive large files, run our business online, and respond instantly to our customers, which is now a business expectation. This functionality isn't new, but it is now available at minimal cost.
- Broadband enables us to use the internet as a tool in a way that would not be possible with dial-up. It brings the internet to my desk and I can open web-pages just like files. The speed means we don't have to save things to hard disk in order to access them quickly.
- We save tremendously on communications costs and our physical presence is reduced because staff can work from home and we can demonstrate our software to customers without leaving the office.
- We find that doing everything by email has a beneficial change on the communication culture - you have all the immediacy of a telephone call but you can structure your communications in a way that you cannot structure a phone call. Emailing someone is not as intrusive as telephoning or going over to speak to someone, and does not interrupt their work in the same way. Instead it allows work to continue whilst still enabling rapid response. Having to use dial-up is not as immediate so it doesn't create this culture.
- Broadband allows our staff to make much better use of their time, they don't have to wait ten minutes for

files to download, so we benefit from increased productivity and they are less frustrated. It also keeps our staff happier as they are able to balance their work / life commitments better.

- Broadband has enabled smarter working because we can search for software/information that we need and download it online – for instance it enabled us to find an open source contract management system, download and implement it in a day.
- We save money on distributing software – now people can simply log on and download patches and support. This is an enormous time and cost saving over couriering disks to Germany, for instance. Further test versions can be loaded onto an environment over which we have control but where the customer can test functionality.
- It also allows us to generate income through the hosting of small applications.
- Broadband also makes it easy to use the internet to gather information to assist in decision making e.g. you have to quote for a new customer and want to find out about their usage profile. Much of the data for say a Forrester's report can be found on the web once you have learnt how to look. In the US listed corporations have to file detailed reports, accessible on the web, called 10-Ks which even give the details of large business deals.
- Why use a travel agent when you can book your own flights just as cheaply on-line?

Does it save you money?

We used to have a Leased Line but now we can have almost the same functionality at a fraction of the cost we've changed to ADSL. In cash terms this change has saved us over £5,000 a year with little change in functionality. Also we buy less "information" and book much of our own travel.

How would you cope if you couldn't have broadband?

We could cope, the business could still run but we would have to change the way we worked and it would be incredibly frustrating. Apart from servicing our clients we would have to send and receive everything on CD which adds a day's delay plus delivery charges. Our telephone bill would go up.