



The client

Renthal is a global leader in the manufacturing, design, and sales of motorcycle, ATV and cycle parts and accessories. It sells market-leading products for motocross, quad bikes, road bikes, and trials bikes, including handlebars, grips, bar mounts, levers, hand guards, chainwheels, chain, and brake pads. Its cycle product portfolio includes handlebars, stems, grips and chainrings, and it is also the leading handlebar manufacturer for motorcycle and ATV aftermarket sales. Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki currently choose to fit Renthal handlebars as original equipment.

As a world-leading manufacturer, Renthal also boasts a proud sporting record, having attained 223 World Championships and 229 US titles in motorcycling and already 11 World Championships in cycling. It is a truly global brand, but the manufacturing heart is in Manchester, UK.

The background

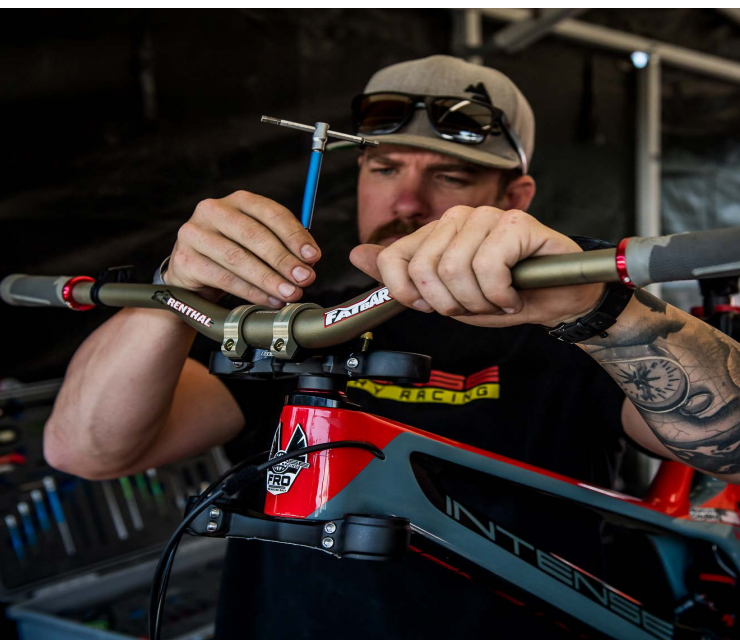
Renthal's IT infrastructure was based around a physical server and was not an efficient use of hardware. The hardware itself was also over six years old and due for replacement. The business was running Microsoft Small Business Server with Exchange, and this and the other server and client operating system were due to go outside of Microsoft's support lifecycle, leaving Renthal potentially vulnerable to malicious intrusion and accidental faults. The existing backup solution was also inadequate, meaning that Renthal would have struggled to respond effectively to an outage, and the workstations throughout the business were running Windows 7, which was also due to go out of the Microsoft support lifecycle.

Additionally, Renthal had outgrown its previous IT managed services provider and was looking for a new partner which had more resource and experience to meet its growing requirements. However, it was also crucial that such a partner retained the flexibility of a smaller business. Out of three potential suppliers, APH were discovered to strike the perfect balance between being large enough to offer substantial expertise and knowledge, but small enough to offer a truly personal service.

The solution

Renthal wanted to retain its infrastructure onsite whilst reducing costs and enhancing its systems in terms of capacity, reliability and speed. It wanted to address the potential vulnerability of its older operating systems, and to access skilled IT technicians who could assist with its key line of business (LOB) application, which was SQL based. Renthal's in-house SQL database administrator (DBA) had recently left the business.

Renthal was keen to learn how Microsoft 365 could be implemented across the business – and at APH we agreed that it would offer much of the resilience, flexibility and agility Renthal was looking for. As such, we migrated Renthal's Exchange mail services to Office 365, a process which included upgrading all the client workstations with the latest version of the client software.



In order to upgrade Renthal's aging physical hardware, we implemented new primary Hyper-V hosts (Dell PowerEdge) and new Server 2019 VMs, all replicated to a secondary server, and migrated all the business's services to the new servers. As part of the process, Renthal wanted to add additional security to its main file system so this was restructured and secured in line with the business's requirements.

To deal with Renthal's inadequate backup provision, we implement a new on-premises backup solution with Veeam Backup & Recovery and a Synology Rackstation. Renthal has quite a large dataset, so we suggested and configured a bespoke CloudBackup solution with a dedicated storage space.

Renthal's material requirements planning (MRP) system was also due an upgrade but this could not be done in line with these core upgrades. Instead, we accommodated a temporary solution to enable the new platform to run alongside the existing SBS and SQL servers. This was ultimately completed with the third-party and the old equipment decommissioned and removed. To complete the solution, we replaced all network switches throughout the site with Dell networking and implemented a new Meraki firewall to replace the legacy Draytek firewall.

Finally, we implemented our full managed services offering, including antivirus (AV), web and email filtering and support services, to proactively identify threats and problems with Renthal's infrastructure, and resolve them with minimal interruptions to the business. This included 12 months of covering the Windows updates on the Windows 7 client workstations with extended support from Microsoft.

Before that 12 months was up, we replaced all the outdated Windows 7 workstations with standardised Dell Optiplex workstations. This was all configured remotely and taken to site, users pre-logged into the workstations in a test environment to check they were happy with all the settings and applications, which were then switched over out of hours to minimise disruption. The users came into the office with new workstations on desks on Monday morning.



The results

Renthal's IT infrastructure is now fully up-to-date and fit for purpose, today and into the future. The benefits have been immediate, from faster, more reliable workstations to reliable backups that the business can confidently and rapidly recover from. In the event of an outage or other problem, Renthal can temporarily be recovered to APH's own onsite datacentre.

The business's aging hardware and physical infrastructure has been rationalised, with six physical servers streamlined down to two. This means that Renthal is more efficiently utilising its server hardware, saving operational costs and generating greater resilience in the event of hardware failure onsite.

Laura Birchall Financial Director at Renthal said: *"APH offered us the perfect balance between the scale and experience needed to offer a really best-in-class solution, and the personal approach of a smaller organisation. Right from the start, APH understood our needs and ambitions, as well as our particular concerns about our soon to be unsupported operating systems. Moving to Microsoft 365 has given us a vastly improved flexibility, and with APH looking after our infrastructure day-to-day, we can focus on growing and enhancing our business."*

Andrew Goodwin at APH said: *"Renthal now has a truly reliable network infrastructure in place, which resulted in better uptime and reliability from day one. The virtualised infrastructure offers far more flexibility than the legacy solution, accommodating business changes as and when Renthal requires."*