



## //Richardson Eyres safeguards operations and supports growth at Liberum Capital

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Founded in 2006, Liberum Capital is an independent investment bank with offices in London and New York. The company prides itself on its dedication to independence and customer service – the values on which the bank was founded.

Liberum Capital's portfolio includes sales and trading, market making and corporate financial services. Thanks to its innovative approach to wealth management, the bank has established a strong reputation among its select client base of high net worth individuals and institutions.

Liberum Capital is 100% owned by its staff, and deploys a simple operating structure that enables it to take rapid advantage of evolving market conditions and opportunities.

#### Driven by performance

For Liberum Capital, the need for a more scalable and recoverable infrastructure was a consequence of success. Having expanded to over 145 people since its launch in 2006, the decision to relocate to a landmark London building reflected the bank's growing size and status. Moreover, the move represented an opportunity to lay down a new server and storage infrastructure that would support dynamic growth and mitigate risk.

'When we founded the business, there were inevitable compromises in the technology we could implement' says Chris Howlett, Liberum Capital's Head of Information Systems.

Our infrastructure grew piecemeal over several years and, in truth, became increasingly difficult to manage' continues Chris. 'The relocation was a great opportunity to take a strategic approach and roll out a modern, flexible infrastructure that would drive growth, improve service levels and reduce risk.'

Liberum Capital was especially determined that its new infrastructure should be highly recoverable. As Liberum's Infrastructure Engineer David Boulton points out, 'availability is a given in our industry. It goes without saying that the damage caused by a serious outage would be catastrophic for our reputation.'

#### A no-compromise approach

Intent not to compromise on quality or performance, Liberum Capital began evaluating the market's best-of-breed server, storage and disaster recovery solutions.

'That meant evaluating market leaders like VMware,' says David Boulton. 'On the hardware side, we looked into HP because of their appetite for virtualisation. Together, HP and VMware solutions had the potential to dramatically reduce our recovery times – and at a price point that was attractive.'

Part of Liberum Capital's commitment to quality was a determination to work with the right calibre of people.

That meant identifying an HP and VMware partner with expertise and experience in areas that were new to Liberum Capital – and who would provide a single point of ownership and responsibility for the new infrastructure.

Liberum Capital invited infrastructure specialist Richardson Eyres to evaluate its needs and make initial recommendations. Richardson Eyres conducted a series of architecture workshops, technical discussions and business presentations – designed both to gain stakeholder buy-in and get right to the heart of Liberum Capital's challenges.

#### Right people, right technology

Guy Longmore, Account Manager at Richardson Eyres, takes up the story.

'Given Liberum Capital were a relatively young company, with an excellent reputation in a highly regulated market, it was of paramount importance to recommend completely trustworthy technologies. We also realised we needed to provide something that was very easy to scale and manage. After reviewing our options, we jointly agreed that Liberum Capital's objectives would be best achieved with HP's c7000 blade server system, an HP P4000 SAN and ESXi Enterprise from VMware. In particular, the proposed HP storage technology offered far greater resilience than Liberum Capital's existing Dell EqualLogic storage environment.'

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'Furthermore, the distance and strength of the links between Liberum Capital's sites made the case for an HP P4000 SAN even clearer. With Network RAID 10 running between the two datacentres, and active VMware clusters on the same subnet at each site, Liberum Capital would be able to share server and storage resources seamlessly between the two datacenters, on- and off-premise. The result would be market-leading resilience, with little intervention required in the event of a disaster.'

Richardson Eyres' in-depth technology knowledge, extensive track record and willingness to take ownership and responsibility for the deployment convinced the IT team at Liberum Capital they were the right partner for the project. But with Liberum Capital's relocation date a constantly moving target, Richardson Eyes was left with just three weeks to roll out the new solution.

#### Capable and conscientious

'Richardson Eyres' determination to meet our challenging deadline convinced us we'd chosen the right partner' says Chris Howlett. 'They literally worked night and day to get the job done.'

'Their close relationship with HP was invaluable' Chris continues. 'We hit an integration issue that proved really tough to resolve. It was Richardson Eyres' extensive relationships within HP, and in particular with their technical experts, that helped get the problem fixed.'

'Whereas some partners may have been tempted to pass the buck back to the manufacturer, Richardson Eyres showed real integrity' notes David Boulton. 'They provided as much consulting as we needed to complete the implementation. As a result, we were ready to go live on our production systems by deadline day. It was a great collective effort.'

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#### How the solution works

With their new virtualised infrastructure, Liberum Capital's recovery site becomes available automatically in the event of a disaster. As the failover site is always on, virtual machines can be moved seamlessly from one server to another.

'If an outage happens, there's no need to actively start up our failover environment, as we would with a traditional dark site' observes Chris Howlett. 'Booting up a dark site can take between two and six hours – whereas Liberum Capital's new virtual failover server and storage platform can be up and running within 15 minutes.'

'Realistically' continues Chris, 'a full system recovery at our previous premises could have taken 24 hours. Today, we can execute a full recovery in a couple of hours.'

As Richardson Eyres' Guy Longmore points out, 'Liberum Capital's systems also 'fail back' automatically – i.e. return to the main production environment once it becomes available again post-disaster. It's effectively one logical system split over two physical environments.'

#### The right results

As well as meeting the brief for a rapidly recoverable server and storage architecture, Liberum Capital's new infrastructure fulfills its other important demands. Thanks to thin provisioning, the HP BladeSystem c7000 and P4000 SAN greatly reduce storage redundancy or 'stranded capacity' in Liberum Capital's infrastructure.

The bank can now deploy new services or add extra volumes as application data grows over time.

'Upgrades and patching are a great deal easier too,' according to David Boulton. 'There's less downtime, shorter maintenance windows and a lot less disruption.'

In fact, as David points out, 'end users in the business are barely aware that we've transitioned to an entirely new virtualised infrastructure. And that's a great testament to its stability and performance.'

#### Fit for the future

As part of a recent planned test, Liberum Capital abruptly powered down its production systems. The result? The failover platform kicked in seamlessly – exactly as planned.

'Liberum Capital's new platform isn't just scalable and reliable' says Chris Howlett. 'It proves that recovery times can be significantly lower with virtualisation. Richardson Eyres delivered what they promised: a modern, robust and adaptive infrastructure, founded on best-of-breed technology, which will scale with our plans for growth for at least five years.'

'Richardson Eyes really proved their worth,' summaries Chris. 'Effectively, they were a proactive and trustworthy member of the Liberum Capital team. They understood our goals and got behind them. Richardson Eyres made an invaluable contribution to the success of the project.'

## Challenge

- Liberum Capital required a flexible new infrastructure to replace its restrictive Dell systems
- It needed to reduce recovery times to the lowest possible level
- The new infrastructure had to be scalable in order to support dynamic business growth

## Solution

- Liberum Capital needed a partner who could provide an end-to-end solution – from systems architecting through to implementation and training. The bank chose Richardson Eyres
- Richardson Eyres deployed an HP BladeSystem c7000, a P4000 SAN, plus ESXi Enterprise Edition and Virtual Center from VMware

## Results

- Dramatically reduced recovery times – Liberum Capital's virtual failover platform can be operational in just 15 minutes
- Simplified infrastructure management and maintenance
- Negligible business disruption during or following the new infrastructure roll out

// Richardson Eyres provides solutions for data centre consolidation. It works with its customers to streamline IT infrastructures, freeing up time, resources and ultimately saving its customers' money.

Richardson Eyres develops long-term and mutually beneficial relationships working with its customers to ensure that it provides bespoke solutions to help their business run efficiently, effectively and above all, profitably.

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It has partnerships with HP and VMware, and is one of a small number of HP Professional Services Partners (PSP) in the UK. It also provides solutions for companies globally, from their offices in the UK and the US.

With over 20 years experience as a data centre consultant, Richardson Eyres has extensive technical knowledge and the know-how to apply this knowledge to help organisations run their IT infrastructures more efficiently. Established in 1986, the company is privately owned and its headquarters is in Chesham, Buckinghamshire.  
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