

Amitech IT saves client from Ransomware Horror!

With over 100 years trading behind them, SJ Andrew & Sons have a history of resilience. This has been much in evidence recently as they successfully navigated a Ransomware attack to come out stronger and wiser on the other end.



This is their story ...

Steel stockholding and industrial supplies specialists SJ Andrew & Sons was founded in 1914 and today employs 33 staff with an average service of 17 years.

Current Director Nathan Andrew, great grandson of the founder, has the dual responsibility of protecting the company's legacy while also moving the business forward. Nathan recognises that IT is crucially important to the company's growth. In order to ensure they have expert advice and support in place, they entrust their IT systems to a managed service provider.



Amitech IT is an IT consultancy and managed service provider that aims to harmonise IT strategy with your business strategy. With over 25 years of experience in delivering technical solutions, they ensure that their customers' IT seamlessly integrates to provide a complete business solution. With offices in Cardiff, Cornwall and Devon – they are also committed to making their customers' IT systems reliable, secure and scalable.

The Attack ...

The first sign of trouble was at 3 pm on a normal trading day. MD Nathan Andrew got a call from a member of staff complaining that they could not seem to access their files, whilst dealing with this another call came in, then another... He soon realised that there was a significant problem – **when he logged on, he could actually see files being encrypted as he watched**. He describes the feeling: "It was terrible.

We were flooded last year - I remember opening the door to the building and water flowing out. That was awful – but this was much worse. I knew with the flood that we could clean it up – but I was really worried about how this would end." What was clear to Nathan at this point was that they were being subjected to a Ransomware attack. What was shocking to Nathan was that he thought that they had taken good security precautions. They had moved to Office 365, they had good anti-virus and firewall protection in place. However, as they were learning the hard way – **there is no silver bullet for Cyber security**.

The Response ...

Their first action was to shut down the PCs and call their service provider who quickly assessed the damage and concurred with Nathan's diagnosis. This was a Ransomware attack. As a senior member of staff owned the compromised PC and had high-level access, contamination was widespread.

However, the service provider was no stranger to Ransomware. "With a Ransomware attack, we won't even consider trying to "fix" or decrypt it and obviously we would never consider paying the ransom. Our response is always – Clean the system and restore from a previous back up".

Fortunately, SJ Andrew & Sons had in place a business continuity solution, which is built on the StorageCraft Recovery Solution.

At the heart of this are image-based backups – snapshots taken as often every 15 minutes. What this

means for a customer like SJ Andrew & Sons is that in the event of a Ransomware attack they can:

- 1- They can easily identify when the virus entered the system (and find the "clean" backup to restore to)
- 2- Using StorageCraft VirtualBoot technology – they can have very fast access to their files (in a matter of minutes) while the full system is being restored
- 3- A minimum of lost data and downtime

In the case of SJ Andrew & Sons, as it was already late in the evening, the provider took the decision to push ahead with a full restore. So that when everyone arrived for work next morning, everything was back to normal.

This was obviously a great relief to SJ Andrew & Sons.

As Nathan commented "Thanks to Amitech IT, we have saved 25 years of data, avoided days of downtime and huge loss of revenue".

The Aftermath

While a Ransomware attack is not something any company wants to experience – for SJ Andrew & Sons this was a good outcome.

Their security was tested and proved effective. It also pointed to areas that they could improve on.

"Amitech IT are now doing more frequent backups and we are replicating to the cloud. This is giving us an extra layer of reassurance that our data is safe!"

It also reinforced their decision to outsource their IT to Amitech IT. On the relationship with Amitech IT, Nathan Andrew comments, " Amitech IT were there when we needed them – **they were calm and in control and their expertise got us back up and running with minimum disruption**".

He goes on to add, "It is very much a collaborative relationship. I am not an IT expert but I know what I need it to do for the business. I can tell Amitech IT where I want to get to and I trust them to put in place the best solution to deliver this."



In Conclusion,

As SJ Andrew & Sons discovered, there is no silver bullet to dealing with Cyber security. Fortunately, their IT Partner had put in place a multi-layered solution that included a host of preventative tools, but also prepared for the worst by installing the StorageCraft disaster recovery solution. SJ Andrew & Sons can look forward to their second century with the reassurance that their IT systems can be a true asset for the business and not a point of vulnerability.



SJ Andrew & Sons
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