

MARK LANE profiles GBM Solutions, a company offering a terrific new service which gives a cost effective solution to all businesses' IT maintenance needs

• GBM Solutions chief executive Omer Kutluoglu (left) and managing director Brian McGrath



profile: **gbm solutions**

An invaluable IT support tool

ORGANISATIONS everywhere are increasingly under threat of their IT infrastructure failing them – whether being corrupted by a virus, being hacked into, or just plainly being mis-configured – the threats are very real. For large businesses with extensive resources, this issue is often negated by the fact that they can afford to employ one or more IT technicians to keep abreast of any threats to their system. But many SMEs don't have this luxury and, as a consequence, the possibility of their system being brought crashing down looms ever large.

For such businesses, the answer is often to place responsibility for IT issues on somebody within the business who is unqualified to manage such a task. Yet thanks to an innovative North East company there is a much more satisfactory solution that can best be described as 'fractional ownership'.

Explaining the term, Omer Kutluoglu, CEO of GBM Solutions Ltd of Sunderland says: "Any company, whether they employ two or 200 people, needs somebody to look after their IT systems. That person needs to be both highly knowledgeable about computer systems in general, as well as totally familiar with the precise needs of their own unique system. This is where we come in and offer a time-share style IT management system. We look at the IT systems of a client and decide how much time they require in order to be managed and maintained effectively. A member of our team then takes total ownership of that system, initially configuring the system correctly, and then ensuring its ongoing stability, security and performance. And, in the event that anything does go wrong, we are on hand to fix it – usually within half an hour or so. We do all of this for a flat monthly fee, in the process saving the client the cost of employing somebody full time."

Like all the best ideas, its beauty is in its simplicity and it is one that is born out of personal insight and understanding. Omer continues: "Having been a director within an SME myself, I know how difficult it can be maintaining IT systems and the problems they



• Gary McGrath, senior engineer at GBM Solutions

can cause. You need expert support but it is not always affordable for smaller companies, or of an adequate standard – hence the idea for GBM. We provide companies with as much or little IT support as they require through a tailor made solution to fit needs and budget."

Continuing, he says: "IT is not an issue companies can simply fudge, especially in this day and age where computer down-time can bring a business to a grinding halt, or worse, the loss of vital information or data can be totally catastrophic."

The focus of GBM is to be a local, on-hand, and invaluable extra support tool for clients. "We work hard to keep our customers up and running smoothly at all times, both via a help-

line direct for each customer through to their own engineer, and via our quick on-site response times", he says. "The point about IT is that you need people to be there ready to react immediately, hence the locally based nature of our business."

But many SMEs are understandably reticent about the idea of employing external IT support – especially when things seem to be working fine. Omer can see the point but argues: "These days, IT is something you have to keep up and maintain on an almost weekly basis. To give a small example, we took all the firewall protection off one of the machines in our office for half an hour. During that time, it was hacked into 32 times. Without regular and up-to-date anti-virus software, installed by somebody who knows and understands your system, this is the kind of very real threat that your company faces."

Although only having been established for just over a year, the response from customers to GBM has, not surprisingly, been overwhelming. "People have really taken us on board and have been thrilled by what we have to offer. What's been most satisfying is that we've really built a rapport with customers, become an intricate part of their business and built up a partnership, and for much less cost than they generally expect. Our message is simple – failure to plan properly for your company's IT maintenance, is planning to fail your company's needs!"

CURIOUS?

Curious about what you've heard? GBM Solutions are offering to do a free, non-invasive, IT systems report for any business readers of Business Contact. Please call the company on 0191 520 1912 or send an email to info@gbmsolutions.com quoting the reference: CMD1104.