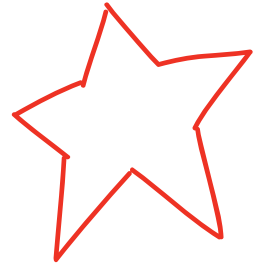


# A Network Upgrade at Waltonen Engineering Shows That People Skills are as Important as Technology Skills in Total Customer Care



**Waltonen Engineering** of Warren, Michigan provides full-service engineering and design services for product development, manufacturing processes, and equipment. Clients include tier-one manufacturers and suppliers in the automotive, aerospace, defense, and consumer product industries, as well as suppliers of robotic and automation equipment. Founded in 1957, Waltonen has built its reputation on long-standing relationships with its clients.

Engineers at Waltonen work in a sophisticated computer-aided design (CAD) environment. Their workstations are digital drafting tables, and the network is the engineer's direct link to each other and their customers.

When Matt Kocot joined Waltonen as IT Manager, he took one look at the maze of cabling and convoluted routing architecture that the network had evolved into over the years, and he knew that a network upgrade was a priority.

A network audit had been conducted by an outside consultant, but the recommendation, Kocot recalls, besides being very expensive, wasn't compelling. "I'm the kind of guy who questions things," Kocot says. The other firm wasn't able to satisfactorily answer his questions. When the CFO at Waltonen mentioned the company had used Logicalis in the past, Kocot decided to meet with Logicalis.

Kocot asked a lot of questions when Logicalis account executive Marlin Kovaleski came to speak with him, but so did Kovaleski. Together they began to work out a strategy that would provide Waltonen with the stable, high-performance network it required. This plan was compelling, and the price was very good, too.

Kocot's comfort level went up another notch when Kovaleski introduced Logicalis Pre-Sales Technology Consultant Don Doyle. "That guy is very smart," Kocot says. "The whole Logicalis team was very accommodating and gracious. They went way above and beyond...which was unexpected but appreciated. At this point, I'm starting to think, wow! These Logicalis guys are good."

Logicalis project manager Jeff Kuhn planned the implementation and introduced Logicalis delivery consultant David Hillman, who would execute the plan with Kocot and his team.

## **"Let's get this done."**

Work got off to a good start on the designated weekend for the upgrade. Kocot was impressed by Hillman's obvious expertise. Kocot also enjoyed working with Hillman. "We got along great, laughing and doing the job." Kocot says Hillman declined to take a break for dinner that first night, saying, "Hey, let's get this done."

Their progress was complicated because the existing cabling was undocumented, and they had to use it as a guide for the new cabling. "It was a big job," Kocot recalls. "We had to move racks and patch panels. In the process, we were able to consolidate switches and remove points of failure and offset all routing and switching to a more capable device."

Just as they appeared to be in the home stretch, an existing router that was outside the scope of the project and wasn't scheduled for replacement abruptly failed, effectively disrupting communications with a key Waltonen client. When it became apparent that a replacement router wouldn't be available before business hours on Monday, the problem was escalated to the CEO's office.

“I’ve dealt with a lot of vendors in my time, and this was the first time someone has gone to that extent above and beyond in everything. Logicalis was forthcoming and on the ball and a pleasure to deal with from the beginning phase to the end.”

**Matt Kocot**, Waltonen Engineering

Hillman, who was working methodically through his part of the network upgrade, was unperturbed when he was made aware of the problem. He asked if there were any existing routers he could work with and reconfigured an available router and installed it in place of the failed one. He was the hero of the day, Kocot recalls, when the link light blinked on, showing that the connection to the customer was restored.

#### **Groundwork for Growth**

The entire implementation—including the router rescue—was completed comfortably before the end of the weekend. “That really jumped us ahead,” Kocot says. “Now we have Gigabyte capacity at every seat; and when you are moving a lot of CAD data around, that reduces transfer time so designers don’t have to wait. Everything is redundant. We went as far as changing battery backups. If power went out before, we had to guess which servers were good and which weren’t. We went over everything and tested it and it’s the way it should be. We’ve laid the groundwork for future growth.”

“When all was said and done, I sat back and said, ‘Those guys were very good.’ I’ve dealt with a lot of vendors in my time and this was the first time someone has gone to that extent above and beyond in everything. Logicalis was forthcoming and on the ball and a pleasure to deal with from the beginning phase to the end.”

“This was not just customer satisfaction. This was total customer care,” Kocot adds. “It was everything. You could always get through to someone. Someone was always there working. I wish everybody was like that. Now, next time we

need anything, I’ll say, ‘Let’s check out Logicalis before we go anywhere else.’”

#### **About Logicalis**

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The Logicalis Group has annualized revenues of \$1 billion, from operations in the UK, US, Germany, South America and Asia Pacific, and is fast establishing itself as one of the leading IT and Communications solution integrators, specializing in the areas of advanced technologies and services.

The Logicalis Group is a division of Datatec Limited, listed on the Johannesburg and London AIM Stock Exchanges, with revenues in excess of \$4 billion.

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