

Cobweb Solutions smoothly migrates REX Features to a modern business productivity solution





Customer Profile REX Features



Industry

Media & Publishing



Business Start Date

1953



Head office

London



Services with Cobweb

Migration to Office 365

In order to focus their expertise on improving the business, REX Features relied on Cobweb Professional Services for a smooth migration from Cobweb Hosted Exchange 2007 to Microsoft Office365.



The pain point

REX was still running Office 2003 and needed to upgrade to a more recent version, while minimising the cost involved.

A strong heritage

REX Features is a British photographic press agency and photo library with a unique history and a vast archive of iconic images. Founded in a front room in north London by Frank and Elizabeth Selby 60 years ago, REX now retains a major presence in the UK editorial market. Staff work 24/7 from their offices in London and Hollywood, Los Angeles, bringing a daily service of news, features, stock photos, and editorial content to media in 36 countries worldwide.

15 million images

Their daily production is fully digital, allowing users access to more than 11 million images, with more than 7,000 new images added daily. This service is supported by a physical archive stretching back to the early days of photography, containing about 15 million images that encompass an immense range of subjects.

Representing leading picture sources

REX represents leading major international picture sources, including celebrity, society and freelance photographers, agencies, film and newspaper archives, television stills libraries and specialist collections around the world. They also shoot 'on set' exclusively for many TV shows such as Britain's Got Talent and Dancing On Ice.

The Challenge

REX manage most of their IT in-house, using bespoke software which is also designed and written internally. Although the IT team possess the skills to support their systems, they need to focus on using their expertise to develop the software needed to run and improve the business.

This long-standing Cobweb customer has outsourced email hosting and management to Cobweb since 2008. They were still running Office 2003 and needed to upgrade to a more recent version, while minimising the cost involved.



How we solved REX problem

Consolidating email and Office tools allows Rex to focus on what they do best, delivering images as quick as possible.

Time to migrate to Office 365

The opportunity to migrate to Office 365 and consolidate their email and Office suite proved to be the ideal solution.

While meeting REX's primary requirement for cost-effectiveness, Cobweb's Professional Services team were able to ensure that the migration was implemented smoothly without disruption to the business.

Rob Myles, Director of Technology for REX Features, said, "The move to Office 365 has made a huge difference to us in terms of productivity as well as cost. The wide range of communication and collaboration tools it offers has allowed us to concentrate on using our resources more effectively and has helped us to increase our competitiveness in the market.

"We have always been very satisfied with the service provided by Cobweb, so did not consider using any other provider. This was the first time that we had used Cobweb's expert Professional Services team, and I found that the tools and guidance they gave us were invaluable.

"The move to Office 365 has made a huge difference to us in terms of productivity as well as cost."

"Firstly, they saved us a lot of time that would have been spent researching the method involved – they know all the possible pitfalls and how to do it best. The whole process would have taken us a lot longer to achieve and certainly would not have gone as painlessly without their help.

"Their support and flexibility meant that the migration was extremely smooth and achieved within our required timeline."

"Importantly, the transition was designed and implemented to meet Rob's administrative requirements as well as the needs of the company's stakeholders. REX did not want to have a 'big bang' migration. By moving a few people onboard at times when they were not in the office, impact on the business would be minimised. "The Cobweb Professional Services team ensured that migrations commenced at times that were convenient for users, while keeping Rob informed of what was going on at each stage so that he could plan accordingly. More than 60 users and over 80 mailboxes were migrated, with people able to finish work on one day and use their mail on Office 365 the next day.

Being able to stage the migration and move users in small batches without interrupting others was a huge advantage," Rob said. As an incredibly busy photo library, REX need to be able to focus on doing the things that only they can do – building the systems to run their business and developing their own software to deliver images as quickly as possible.

"Hosting our own email would be a real distraction to us, especially when Cobweb can offer us a specialist service to do it all, including maintenance and back-up," Rob explained.

REX are now running an up-to-date version of Office and employees are able to open all the attachments they get sent, rather than having to have them converted by the fewer users running more modern versions of Office. The improved Outlook Web Access and SharePoint web management system are also major benefits.

Rob added, "Looking forward, we are very interested in Lync 2013, the Unified Communications feature offered by Office 365, which brings together all communication channels, from voice, messaging and email, to conferencing.

"We have an office in Los Angeles and with clients all over the world this service would give us instant communication and allow us to conduct online meetings with multiple users, regardless of the software we use. That improvement in collaboration between us all would be much more convenient and potentially reduce costs."

In short...

Cobweb's support and flexibility meant that the migration was extremely smooth.

Migration happened in small batches, meaning impact on the business was minimized.

Rex can once again focus on what they do best and benefit from increased productivity



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