Case Study

Fengrain recognised how much IT was evolving so partnered with Sharp to help facilitate their growth.

Fengrain is a dynamically operated farmer-owned co-operative. They work for and on behalf of their growers to help them maximise their returns, whilst at the same time ensuring their customers receive excellent service and technically assured quality grain.

Sharp spoke with Kevin Cooper, Chief Finance Officer, who has been with Fengrain for over three decades and has taken on a variety of roles throughout the years. Kevin was an integral part of the process when selecting an IT support provider, which ultimately led to Fengrain becoming Sharp's client in 2003.

Fengrain

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The challenge

- IT rapidly evolving
- Unable to afford an in-house IT team
- Internal IT training and development too difficult

An initial challenge for Fengrain was the number of devices they had to outsource to an IT Support provider. In addition to a high volume of devices, they wanted a provider that would keep technology up to date with the latest updates and advancements, allowing them to do their jobs efficiently and keep up with their own work demand.

"We recognised how much IT was evolving and knew we would struggle with doing our day jobs if we didn't outsource our IT. Being a smaller company, we couldn't afford to have our own IT team and knew that keeping up with technology advancements in-house as well as training and development for an IT team would be too difficult and too expensive," said Kevin.

The solution

- Sharp's Complete IT Manager
- Unlimited helpdesk support
- IT roadmap and future-proofing plans

Sharp proposed it's Complete IT Manager solution, which meant taking full responsibility of Fengrain's IT and providing them with unlimited Helpdesk Support, whilst becoming an outsourced extension of their team. "Agriculture is an industry where you want to know who you are dealing with, you want to meet the people, know the people, and have a personal connection." Kevin explained.

Complete IT Manager is the perfect solution for organisations who would prefer to leave the IT and systems to capable experts, and instead focus on the core running of their business. So it wouldn't matter if Fengrain needed infrastructure maintenance, issues resolving remotely via the local Helpdesk, or proactive on-site support, Complete IT Manager would cover it all.

The result

- Strategic IT priorities and investments
- Quarterly meetings to review IT
- Swift responses to IT issues for minimal disruption

When asked about Sharp's service and what makes it right for Fengrain, Kevin explained "You do what you say on the tin and haven't ever let us down. Farmers are very loyal and once trust is broken it's hard to re-build. We have always trusted Sharp and know they would go out on a limb for us, as we would for them."

An example of Sharp going above and beyond was a particular occasion when Fengrain's servers went down. Sharp rushed to the premises straight away, armed with new servers, and stayed until the early hours of the morning to ensure Fengrain would be up and running by morning, resulting in minimal disruption.

Sharp hold quarterly meetings to review Fengrain's IT Roadmap, offering consultative advice and guidance. With Sharp's support, Fengrain are able to weigh up the pros and cons and understand where they should be prioritising and investing. "We know it's important to think about security by design and putting IT/ technology measures in place properly in the first instance, rather than as a result of something going wrong – which is why we always listen and adopt Sharp's guidance," Kevin said.

When circumstances have changed, Sharp have been able to scale Fengrain's contract, reducing their technical consultancy onsite days whilst offering the same level of support.

"Sharp always delivers a solid consistency of support and having a technical consultant onsite who knows our systems and our quirks, it really strengthens the relationship we have built over the years."

Kevin Cooper, Chief Finance Officer, Fengrain

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