

kikki.K [then]

"This is one of the things it's all about, I know I can get on with working alongside Kristina and build our business while specialists at itro deal with everything IT."

Paul Lacy [Partner kikki.K]



CASE STUDY



Since its opening in January, 1999, kikki.K – Swedish Home/Office Style – has been acclaimed widely in the Australian media as one of this country's great small business success stories. Founded by Kristina 'Kikki' Karlsson, the company designs, produces and sells a unique range of home and office stationery products. In November 2003, following immense success with their first store in the fashionable Melbourne Central retail complex, Kristina and her partner Paul Lacy expanded their base of operations to include a new store at Chadstone shopping centre and an office/warehouse in Port Melbourne. This was soon followed by further expansion with a store in Sydney's Bondi during the first half of 2004.

Hand-picked

In late 2002, following an assessment by Microsoft Australia of a number of Melbourne-based IT service providers, itro was selected to participate in a joint project for kikki.K's early adoption of Microsoft Small Business Server (SBS) 2003. Throughout the course of the project, itro staff worked closely with Lacy to design and deploy a secure and reliable network that would support

kikki.K's rapidly growing operations.

For Lacy, while the completion of the project represented an enormous step forward in the company's ability to work effectively and collaboratively, he was still faced with the challenge of managing the network

"The new network, with SBS 2003 and Windows XP, was without a doubt an incredible improvement over our previous

setup," Lacy said. "But for me, adding users, installing new applications, checking server reports and helping my staff deal with day-to-day IT issues represented a loss of valuable time. I need to be meeting with clients and suppliers instead of installing operating system service packs and teaching people how to send an e-mail!"

After considering the possibility of employing a part-time IT manager, Lacy shelved that idea in favour of contracting itro to provide total support for PCs (itro Desktop Assurance), the server (itro Server Assurance) and staff (itro Help Desk Assurance).

Saving time = saving money

For Lacy, the ability to concentrate on running his business while itro deals with the day-to-day management of the company's IT brings with it the main benefit of saved time – and time means money. By placing the responsibility squarely in the hands of itro, he estimates that at least two hours a week of his time has been freed up from dealing with the multitude of typical IT support and maintenance issues.

"Two hours is a very conservative estimate," Lacy stated. "And even then, that equates easily to several hundred dollars and, over the course of a year, a cost saving of around \$10,000 in my time alone!"

Everyone benefits

While the partnership with itro provides Lacy with savings in time and money, it's also the kikki.K staff members who benefit.

By taking advantage of the Help Desk Assurance service, any kikki.K staff member can call through to one of itro's technicians for immediate assistance on anything from a forgotten password through to creating formulas in Microsoft Excel.

"One of the reasons I decided to partner with itro was that they had the depth of skills that covered virtually every aspect of our IT needs," Lacy said. "The itro specialists understand that the issues we face in running a small business are every bit as critical to us as they are in an enterprise environment.

"So when anyone at kikki.K has any IT problem or question, they know that in the majority of cases someone from itro can either deal with it over the phone or log on remotely to the PC or server in question and fix the problem. This is precisely the sort of response and service that's essential in any sized business."

Affirmative action

A typical example of kikki.K's experience with itro came about with the recent release and accompanying controversy of Service Pack 2 for Microsoft Windows XP. While most small business owners either ignored the update or simply hoped that it would have no adverse affect on their systems and applications, Lacy was able to leave it solely to itro. After an internal evaluation and assessment of the Service Pack, it was rolled out by itro staff who logged on remotely – and after hours – to each of the kikki.K client PCs.