

European expansion in short timescales



Technical summary

Local Area Network

- SYSTIMAX Category 6 GigaSPEED UTP

Voice Network

- SYSTIMAX Category 6 GigaSPEED UTP – ITS Dealerboards

- Category 3 CW1308 – Analogue & Digital Telephones

Horizontal User Outlets

- SYSTIMAX Category 6 GigaSPEED UTP

Fibre Backbone

- SYSTIMAX 12 core OptiSPEED 62.5/125 micron

Patchcords

- SYSTIMAX Category 6 GigaSPEED UTP patchcords

The challenge

One of the world's leading financial institutions with offices in Europe, the USA and Asia recently turned to Excel I.T. when it was expanding offices in Milan to accommodate additional staff. As it was not possible to expand on the same floor, the only option was the 3rd floor, which had space available and had a riser linking it with existing offices making connectivity between them much easier.

The solution

Excel I.T. had a proven track record of working with this financial institution in various locations throughout Europe and could demonstrate the procurement and logistical expertise required to meet the project deadlines. The company takes no chances with logistics on any European project and uses its own staff with mobile phones and vehicles fitted with satellite navigation to give the location of each shipment and an accurate delivery time. This project would be completed in three sub-phases over a six-week period, with the engineers flying back to the UK when they had finished each part of their sub-phase. The total distance travelled by the engineers would eventually exceed approximately 17,000 miles.

Phase One

Once the materials were on site, the first phase of the project was to install the structured cabling on the 3rd floor. As this work would be noisy and intrusive, Excel I.T. could only work out of office hours to ensure that any disruption to business operations was minimised. In the event, working in the cooler conditions during the night was more comfortable for the engineers than having to cope with Milan's summer daytime temperatures, which reached over 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Phase Two

After completing the third floor, it was time to upgrade the existing 6th floor space, bringing it up to the required specification. To accommodate the expansion, the communications infrastructure was being increased in size and the legacy structured cabling was being upgraded. Because this phase of the project would take place in an area populated by the institution's staff, all work would again have to take place out of hours.

The old structured cabling was removed section-by-section as engineers completed each sub-phase horizontally at the user end. However, the main core of the old infrastructure would be left in place until all voice and data services had been successfully migrated onto the new SYSTIMAX Category 6 GigaSPEED cabling. The removal of the old infrastructure was completed within a tight deadline from Friday night through to Sunday. This was achieved

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Continued



Facts & figures

- Distance from London to Milan as the crow flies – 600 miles.
Total amount of miles flown by Excel I.T. engineers and Project Managers during the project, was more than 17,000 miles or the equivalent of 5,322 laps of Silverstone's famous Formula One racetrack.
- 50,000 metres of cable was installed – each cable has 8 conductors, so the total length if connected end-to-end would be 400,000 metres.
- 194 network ports
- Approximately 700 horizontal user ports
- Several bottles of Chianti to celebrate a project well planned, implemented and handed over on time & within budget!!

despite the fact that many rows of floor tiles had to be carefully lifted to gain access to the old cabling which was cable tied and loomed every tile space apart.

Excel I.T. also had to remove the old metal data and voice frames from the comms room. Each frame had to be dismantled piece by piece and by the end of the phase of the project, more than a ton of scrap cable had been carefully taken off-site for collection by a local scrap metal broker.

The migration of voice and data services was achieved with minimal disruption to the business.

Phase Three

With the building now fully cabled, all that remained was to move the users into their final desk locations.

Excel I.T. Project Manager Ian Yarnton was chosen to accomplish this as he had previously managed other high profile moves for this financial institution. His experience and knowledge of its procedures would prove to be invaluable in ensuring the success of this phase of the project.

After surveying every position, Ian briefed his Moves Team, so they could start the patching to the new infrastructure. This task was made more complicated as both legacy and new structured cabling terminated on the comms room frames.

To overcome this problem, colour-coded patchleads were used. The new Category 6 patchleads had collars attached just behind the RJ45 plug, which saved a lot of time when it came to the actual cutover of the frames.

Ian Yarnton commented: "The last thing we wanted when we had such a narrow window of time to complete the work, was not knowing where things were connected or disconnecting work that had only recently been patched. However, the preparation and planning that was put into the project ensured that the patching cutover was completed without a single hitch."

Conclusion

The project was hailed as a great success by the users in Milan as well as the management team based in London. According to a spokesperson: "We have spent the last two years significantly increasing both the amount of space and the quality of the overall physical infrastructure in Milan." Excel I.T. played a key role in guaranteeing the business was kept up and running for the duration of the project and is now ready for the next phase of European infrastructure rollouts.