



IBM® Lotus® Notes® and Domino® 8.5.1: LAN2LAN forms a worldwide upgrade path for Doncasters

“We were able to follow a clear path that matched the needs of the organisation. LAN2LAN equipped us with the skills we needed to get maximum benefit from the Lotus Notes 8.5.1 platform.”

Brian Hollis, IT Manager,
European Operations,
Doncasters Group Ltd

Background

Doncasters Group Ltd is a leading international engineering company, operating from sites in the UK, Continental Europe, the USA, China and Mexico. The Group manufactures precision components and assemblies and has a global reputation for its excellence in working with materials that are difficult to shape and form.

The Doncasters Group serves customers in a variety of industries, including aerospace, industrial gas turbines, specialist automotive, petrochemicals and construction. Their client base is global and comprises most of the industry leaders in each sector. The Group currently employs around 5,000 people worldwide.

The Challenge

You have to be agile, fast and inventive to compete successfully in today's globalised manufacturing sector. The Doncasters Group has sustained its success for more than 230 years, through global expansion and continuous innovation.

The Group's global IT infrastructure is vital for the business, allowing rapid communication and collaboration across continents and time zones. However, by February 2009 the IBM® Lotus® Notes® 7.02 platform was at full stretch. The decision was taken to upgrade to the new Lotus Notes 8.5.1 environment.

“LAN2LAN have been key partners for Doncasters for two years,” says Brian Hollis, IT Manager, European Operations for Doncasters. “We consulted their specialist IBM Lotus team about our strategic goals as a business, and took advice on how upgrading to the new platform could help us to achieve them.”

The Solution

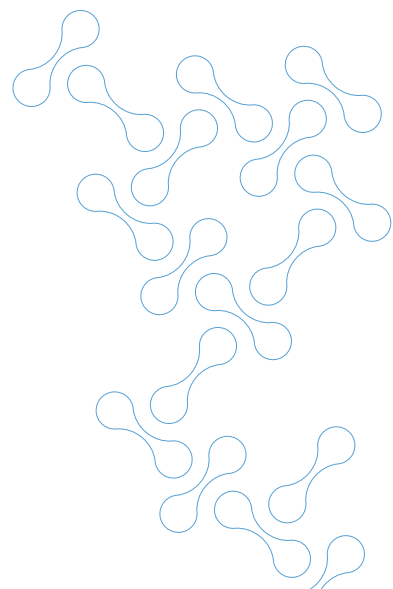
“We worked closely with Doncasters' IT team throughout the project,” says Robert Gladh of LAN2LAN. “The first goal was to plan the upgrade path and roadmap, in line with the practical needs of the business.”

“The next step was the technical design and build, followed by the implementation. A key requirement was to enable Doncasters' in-house team to complete the roll-out across the worldwide Group. For this project, training and skills transfer were as important as the actual upgrade process.”

Collaboration was a defining element of the project. One of the major benefits of Lotus 8.5.1 is the enhanced collaboration capabilities it delivers to businesses, with the integration of applications such as Lotus Sametime® and Lotus Quickr®. At the same time, the challenging upgrade process called for close collaboration between LAN2LAN's specialists and the Doncasters teams around the world.

“After working together over the last two years, LAN2LAN already had a good understanding of our business,” says Brian Hollis. “They were able to present a clear business case for Lotus 8.5.1 and the specific benefits it would deliver for us.”

Having agreed the roadmap, key consultants from LAN2LAN hosted a series of workshops to introduce the implementation process to the Doncasters team.



“We focused first on upgrading the server estate,” says Brian Hollis. “Between our data centre and the sites around the world we have 30 Lotus Domino servers; some were done remotely, others required site visits.”

For remote upgrades, the software was sent to the site for loading. The LAN2LAN and Doncasters teams were then able to access the servers remotely to configure the installation and complete the upgrade process.

Some of the more complex server upgrades required site visits. Where necessary, LAN2LAN specialists flew out to the international offices to work with the teams on location, and to provide training and skills transfer.

The project also allowed Doncasters to build greater mobility into its IBM Lotus deployment. LAN2LAN’s experience in integrating Lotus with the BlackBerry® smartphone platform ensured that the Group would be able to extend the collaborative power of Lotus Notes and Domino 8.5.1 out to its mobile workforce.

The Results

“This was a major step for the Doncasters Group and our partnership with LAN2LAN was fundamental to its success,” says Brian Hollis. “With multiple sites and thousands of users, it could have been an enormously disruptive and time-consuming exercise.

“Instead, we were able to follow a clear path that matched the needs of the organisation and left us with the skills we needed to get maximum benefit from the new platform.”

LAN2LAN delivered a blend of online and instructor-led training sessions to guide the Doncasters team through the initial upgrade process and enable them to complete the programme themselves. With the server upgrade complete, the in-house team now had the skills and experience required to manage the upgrade of the clients with no more than advisory support from LAN2LAN.

“Lotus Notes and Domino 8.5 give our design and manufacturing teams much greater capacity for collaboration,” says Brian Hollis. “The platform can adapt and scale with the needs of the global organisation. On the operational level, features like the DAOS (Domino Attachment and Object Service) give us greater disk efficiency and help to optimise the performance of the whole infrastructure.

“Partnership was the key to the success of the upgrade,” he concludes. “At every step, LAN2LAN’s focus was on delivering the process without problems, while equipping us with the skills to complete the project and exploit the full potential of the Lotus Notes and Domino 8.5.1 platform in the future.”

BENEFITS OF LAN2LAN’S IBM LOTUS NOTES AND DOMINO 8.5.1 EXPERTISE

- Comprehensive upgrade with minimal disruption
- Integration with the BlackBerry® smartphone platform
- Skills transfer – dedicated Lotus 8.5.1 training for the in-house IT team
- Close alignment of the new deployment with corporate goals

THE CHALLENGE

- The Doncasters Group wanted to upgrade its worldwide infrastructure from IBM Lotus 7.02 to the Lotus 8.5.1 platform
- The project called for training and skills transfer to allow the in-house team to complete the upgrade process

THE SOLUTION

- LAN2LAN worked with the Doncasters team to plan the upgrade path and roadmap
- The project incorporated technical design and build, as well as initial implementation
- Installation and configuration was completed via site visits and remote access
- A series of bespoke training sessions – online and instructor-led – enabled the Doncasters team to take the project to completion

IBM Lotus software

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