PJR Consultants Ltd

PJR Consultants is a startup business providing IT services to SME's including the development of custom software solutions, IT consultancy, and advice. They have a software development partner in Budapest who they use on some software development projects.

The three business partners, Phil, James, and Rajiv live in Manchester, Oxford, and London respectively. They have rented a small office in Oxford where James works, but Phil and Rajiv work from their home-offices for cost and logistical reasons. They try to schedule a team meeting in the Oxford office once a week.

It soon became obvious that they needed an IT infrastructure that was flexible enough to meet their work patterns, something that was professional, reliable, and able to adapt with the peaks, troughs, and hopefully continuing growth of their business; the last thing they wanted was to invest in something that might soon need replacing.

When choosing how to set up their IT infrastructure they agreed upon the following basic parameters:

1.   Keep one-off costs as low as possible and manage cash flow efficiently
2.   Make sure the business projects a professional image to the outside world
3.   Be able to work flexibly at home, in the office, and on the move
4.   Share emails, contacts, calendars, and files easily and securely
5.   Manage and store their important files and data efficiently and in one place

The Solution

For Email, Calendar, and Contacts they chose **Hosted Microsoft Exchange** from Sapien IT. This service uses Microsoft
Outlook, which is the best *professional* combined Email, Calendar, and Contacts system available. Permission based, it allows users to share company information. You can keep local copies using Outlook installed on your laptop or PC (which is downloadable for free if you don't already have it), and use a web Outlook version using secure access via an internet browser if you want to check your emails in an internet café (for example). The local and hosted versions are always kept in sync as soon as you connect to the internet. When you are not connected to the internet, you can carry on working with your local copy.

Because the service is hosted by Sapien IT, there are no expensive bits of kit to buy, like servers, cabling, networking,
etc. The service is payable on a rolling monthly contract per user, with absolutely no tie-ins. It's easy to set up and requires virtually no management once it's up and running.

Phil, James, and Rajiv had a Blackberry, iPhone, and a Samsung Omnia (running Windows mobile) respectively. For an additional monthly cost, they were able to **integrate their Outlook service with their phones** which allowed them to send and receive emails, and have access to company contacts and calendar.

For Accessing and Managing their Data and Files: they chose the **Hosted File Server** from Sapien IT. They wanted to store all of their company information in one place so that they could manage their data more efficiently; they could also implement regular backups of their data. Traditionally they would have had to buy a file server for a few thousand pound, set it up and leave it running continuously (they wanted out of hours access to information). They would also have had to buy a backup device and media (tapes or optical disc), and make sure that the backup completed and the media was taken offsite or stored in a fire-proof safe.

With the Sapien IT service, the file server is hosted remotely in a professional data centre so no upfront expensive purchases. Backups are carried out automatically. As you would expect, there is redundancy and failover built in so that processing is seamlessly transferred between servers, meaning that you can expect almost 100% uptime. The service can be configured to suit each businesses requirement; Phil, James, and Rajiv chose to have a local copy of some data on their laptops and PC's so that they could work without an internet connection.

The local data is synchronised automatically with the hosted data whenever they log onto the internet. They are also able to allow access of some file folders to their partners in Budapest instead of having to email them; the service is permissions based so other company files are not accessible by them.

They decided to go with the **Sapien IT VOIP service** which gives them a company telephone exchange, with automated answering service, internal extension numbers, IVR, call forwarding, telephone conferencing facilities, a choice of numbers, and low-cost external calls.

The cost for these services came to just over £40 per person per month. See the table below for a full breakdown.

Service	Quantity	Unit Price £	Total Price £
Hosted Exchange	3	10.99	32.97
Blackberry Integration	1	8.99	8.99
Windows mobile and iPhone integration	2	3.99	7.98
Hosted File Server	3	12.99	38.97
VOIP	3	11.00	33.00
Total per month			**121.91**
Monthly cost per person			**40.64**
One-off set up costs			**160**