

## DMS Maritime and PicNet

### *A growth partnership*

DMS Maritime Pty Limited (DMS) was formed in 1997 to service a complex 10-year contract delivering a very diverse range of Port services and equipment and vessels for the Royal Australian Navy. Under the Port Services and Support Craft (PSSC) contract, DMS provides a comprehensive and wide range of support activities to the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Over the years the company has grown to deliver other projects and services, such as the delivery and through life support of a fleet of 14 Armidale Class Patrol Boats for the Royal Australian Navy.

The original team at DMS was made up of engineers, project managers and ex-navy personnel who were experts in their areas but did not include members with advanced IT knowledge. DMS realised that in order to operate efficiently and most effectively service their clients they required an IT knowledge resource to develop and manage their IT infrastructure. The options open to DMS were to either create a permanent in-house IT department, or outsource the service to a third party.

Since IT was not a core function of their business activities, DMS made the decision to outsource the IT service function. The goal being to allow the company to focus on providing expert marine services to the Navy, while having a specialist IT management group take care of IT requirements. This would enable DMS to gain strategic value from their IT partner without incurring the set-up and ongoing costs involved with developing a permanent in-house IT team.

PicNet was chosen by DMS to fulfil the IT management services role, with the relationship beginning in 2003. PicNet primarily looked after the network at DMS's National Support Office for its Port Services contract. PicNet provided a level three engineer who would be onsite for two or three days a week to manage the IT infrastructure at DMS's PSSC office at Garden Island.

In these early days the typical problems that PicNet was responsible for included normal IT service desk problems, such as:

- Managing all of the users
- Providing support desk resource
- User administration
- Back up of data
- Restoring of lost data
- Managing password problems
- Fixing printer issues
- Helping with network issues

At the time none of the DMS sites were connected on a LAN. PicNet managed the individual connections across nine DMS sites distributed throughout NSW, VIC, QLD, SA, NT and WA to make sure they stayed up, and monitored and dealt with any issues should any of the connections drop.

Following a successful first year the contract with PicNet was extended in 2004 to provide a full-time support engineer. PicNet was responsible for managing all of DMS's IT services and was also given the responsibility to develop software for some of the company's software systems. This focused primarily on developing internal operating systems, and also to build, support and host an intranet and their outward-facing website.

At the same time DMS won the contract for the support and maintenance throughout the lifetime of the Navy's new Armidale Class Patrol Boats. PicNet also developed the public-facing website for this contract, which was regularly updated with news and information about the completion and commission of new patrol boats.

In 2005 the partnership with PicNet deepened when the company was asked, on the recommendation of the PSSC team, to provide IT support for DMS's project office, which was a separate office in Sydney's CBD. At that point DMS had two main divisions: the PSSC for port services contracts, and their project office responsible for the Armidale patrol boats contract and the new Australian Customs Vessels contract. The project office also had two other branch offices in Cairns and Darwin, which were separate offices altogether.

The support provided by PicNet included general helpdesk support, network infrastructure, and more importantly, centralising DMS's discrete sites together onto one WAN. This was a large scale project with DMS sites spread out across Australia and incorporating different business units, with each site having its own server network. PicNet worked with DMS to develop a corporate WAN that ran all round the country, with all servers centralised at the corporate office.

In 2006 DMS went through a major internal restructure which involved merging the separate project site and port services and customs accounts into one entity where they would share offices, share personnel and share resources.

PicNet managed the whole IT restructuring process to enable DMS to function as a single entity from a new location. This was a milestone project that lasted approximately one year and really cemented the relationship between DMS and PicNet. It involved a number of internal projects, such as:

- Moving the servers from the office on Garden Island to the new Corporate office in the city
- Integrating the whole IT infrastructure
- Upgrading and linking the 16 major sites around the country, plus separate larger ships with their own internet connections, to a single WAN
- Maximising the use of WAN to minimise bottlenecks and bandwidth limitations

Everything was centralised at the new Corporate office at Clarence Street, Sydney, including the main data centre. The site offices still had their own servers but all the main applications such as payroll and the main ERP systems were run from the head office.

At this time PicNet was providing two full-time service desk staff and a full time project manager to provide software development services for the whole corporate site and IT administration.

The next few years saw a period of consolidation, bedding in the new infrastructure and maximising the performance of the WAN. By mid-2008 DMS had 250 heads and the company was winning other short-term contracts for the Navy.

### **Partnership**

Because of the length of time and close manner in which PicNet worked with DMS, they developed a great understanding of what the company was trying to achieve. Throughout this period DMS didn't have any internal IT resource or specialism. PicNet was put in a trusted advisor role, providing this strategic guidance along with senior management support, which enabled DMS to focus on its own strengths.

DMS used PicNet as a strategic IT resource. From background planning, to IT administration to specialised projects, the team at PicNet became an extension of DMS facilitating their strategic growth. As Rob Freedman, Project Manager at DMS, says: "We've always maintained a close working relationship with PicNet. We would have regular discussions looking at the status of help desk jobs and analysis of current project progress, through to forward planning and examination of the IT operations required to achieve our business goals. The detailed strategic reviews we ran of the company helped guide our growth and secure the funding required for project implementations."

Some of the major IT projects achieved during this time include:

- Implementation of internal systems such as the development of DMS's intranet site, which had a number of applications including intranet reporting
- Creation of a business management system where the company could put all its documentation, including all the jobs DMS did within a contract. This was particularly useful when bidding or re-bidding for a contract as they had access to information that identified what was needed for that type of job, including what they would do, how they would do it and the number of people required
- The development of the enterprise risk management software solution Risk Shield, which allowed DMS to manage its risk and compliance requirements
- Setting up the corporate head office and all the infrastructure development that went with it. Lots of changes in the organisation were based on strategic reviews that DMS did with PicNet
- Maintaining a high level of service, availability and performance of network and systems. At the end of 2009 the level of uptime was above 99% for all services

### **Benefits of working with PicNet**

"One thing we appreciate about working with PicNet is the flexibility they provide," says Glenn Casarotto, IT Manager, DMS. "For example, if we require someone senior to do a particular project then PicNet will always make that person available. The approachability of PicNet's senior management also stands out. They are available at any time to respond to any query or question.

"Another area where I feel we benefit is through the cross-share team structure they use. By transferring and sharing knowledge gained with other customers in tackling infrastructure and

service level issues the PicNet team adds a level of strategic consultancy that is hard to find when consistently serviced by a single dedicated individual.”

### **Looking ahead**

In 2010 DMS renewed its contract with PicNet to run through 2014. PicNet now provides a senior level three systems administrator and a junior engineer for service desk operations, along with senior level consultancy and project software development.

The partnership between DMS and PicNet continues to grow, with two major projects completed since the new contract was signed:

#### **1. Virtualisation project**

Increasingly PicNet is moving DMS towards a virtualised infrastructure, with retired servers being replaced with virtual machine technology

#### **2. Implementation of a disaster recovery centre**

PicNet has designed and implemented a system where a cold disaster recovery facility has been implemented at the Garden Island office. Should a disaster take out DMS’s data centre at the corporate headquarters, the Garden Island office can be up and running in the space of a few hours and provide the same services that run from the corporate office. PicNet has been able to utilise existing and spare hardware retired from the corporate office to run the disaster recovery site, increasing the return from the original hardware spend

And with DMS recently winning the Commonwealth’s Fleet Marine Services contract (FMSC) for the Royal Australian Navy, worth over \$500m, the value that PicNet provides DMS has never been more important.

The FMSC will supersede the Port Services and Support Craft Contract (for which DMS was incorporated) as the mechanism for outsourcing the Navy’s national fleet support needs and will modernise engineering and ILS systems while supporting vessel operations and maintenance, training, port services, in-service support, integrated logistics and marine project management and vessel build and modification.

“What working with PicNet has allowed us to do is focus on our own skills and competencies,” adds Glenn Casarotto. “Not only has this resulted in long- term savings through making the right IT decisions, we have also been able to prosper by having a trusted partner that knows where our business wants to go and what needs to be done to help it get there.”