

AGA Rangemaster Case Study

AGA Rangemaster cooks up a high-performance network to Phoenix Software's recipe

Overview

AGA Rangemaster Group manufactures the iconic, world-famous range cookers, in addition to owning numerous other kitchen appliance and interior furnishing brands. The company, which was formed when the AGA Foodservice Group merged with Rangemaster in 2008, employs just over 2,500 people worldwide.

While AGA Rangemaster became one brand in 2008, a large proportion of Aga and Rangemaster's IT systems had remained on two separate networks and infrastructures for many years, albeit with some shared storage and limited cross-company integrations. Bringing the company together on one purpose-built system had always been an ambition, but the project was inevitably pushed down the priority list as new, more pressing projects required attention; that was until a software misconfiguration that prevented the sharing of files internally brought the issue to a head.

Challenge

With AGA Rangemaster's 550+ UK staff unable to share files across the network, the company's IT Operations Manager, Michael O'Connor, sought out an immediate resolution to the problem. O'Connor's research led him to the experts at Phoenix Software. →

AGA RANGEmaster

Key Facts

The Challenge

After the merger of two companies, AGA Rangemaster needed guidance and support to develop and deploy a single network architecture with minimal disruption to the company's 550+ staff.

The Solution

Phoenix Software designed a new network architecture based on Microsoft Windows Active Directory 2012 R2 and Exchange 2010, with redundancy between two main sites.

The Benefits

A redundant, high-performance network delivered with no disruption to end users and at minimum cost.

During a 10-minute phone call with one of Phoenix Software's Microsoft Exchange experts, Phoenix soon diagnosed the issue as a DNS routing error. The error was fixed and files were being shared again before the phone call had even finished.

With the immediate crisis averted, O'Connor and his team turned their attention to merging the two companies' networks once and for all. This would not just make life easier for AGA Rangemaster's relatively small IT team which had to manage two different infrastructures, domains and email organisations, but would improve the productivity of the company's 550+ users who had to battle with the system's various idiosyncrasies every day. "Where do I save this file?" "Where did I put that file?" and "How do I find this person's email address?" were common questions for AGA Rangemaster's staff. They turned to Phoenix Software to help put these issues to bed.



The Solution

The project started with a three-day planning session with one of Phoenix Software's Microsoft infrastructure experts, mapping out AGA Rangemaster's existing configuration and desired future state.

"The three-day planning session was incredibly enlightening. Phoenix Software listened to our requirements, asked detailed and probing questions about our usage and overarching objectives, and were quick to highlight technical challenges that we would never have thought of ourselves," commented O'Connor. "Phoenix Software clearly understands Active Directory and Microsoft Exchange, and put a plan together that was realistic for us. They conducted a thorough scoping exercise to ensure the new infrastructure would meet our needs into the future without going overkill and architected a design that was exactly what we needed."

Phoenix proposed a cross-forest consolidation project using native Microsoft tools to minimise additional spend, in addition to upgrading AGA Rangemaster's directory and messaging systems. To minimise user impact, the systems would run concurrently during the transition with complete coexistence. The project included a domain upgrade from Windows Active Directory 2003 to 2012 R2, plus an Exchange organisation upgrade from Exchange 2003 to Exchange 2010. Due to specific technical limitations of Exchange 2003, AGA Rangemaster could not upgrade beyond Exchange 2010 in a single migration with Microsoft's own tools. It would however be relatively simple to upgrade from 2010 in the future. ➔

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Michael O'Connor, IT Operations
Manager, AGA Rangemaster Group

The migration itself was carried out by AGA Rangemaster's internal IT team over the course of 18 months, and included the migration of 550 users (user accounts, mailboxes and workstation images) to a single Active Directory forest and 250 mail groups across six primary sites and the company's network of shops throughout the UK.

The Benefits

- **Cost effective upgrade** - by architecting a solution that was on-spec and could be deployed using Microsoft's own tools, Phoenix Software was able to keep the CAPEX to a minimum, while AGA Rangemaster further controlled its costs by handling the migration itself
- **Seamless migration** - running the new and old systems concurrently during the migration ensured minimum disruption to end users. This also ensured that no data was lost – not a single email or file was reported lost
- **Management simplicity** - with only one domain to manage and the additional features of Exchange 2010, AGA Rangemaster's IT team have much more control and significantly less admin to contend with
- **Redundancy** - a considerable risk of AGA Rangemaster's previous infrastructure was the lack of redundancy. If its systems went down there was no BAU failover capabilities. Since AGA Rangemaster already had data centres in two separate locations as a by-product of the two companies' coming together, Phoenix Software's design sought to take advantage of this and designed failover between the two sites. Now, if one site fails the workload is seamlessly picked up by the other, with zero performance impact for end-users

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Next Steps

For further information on the products and services available from Phoenix Software, contact a member of our team on:

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