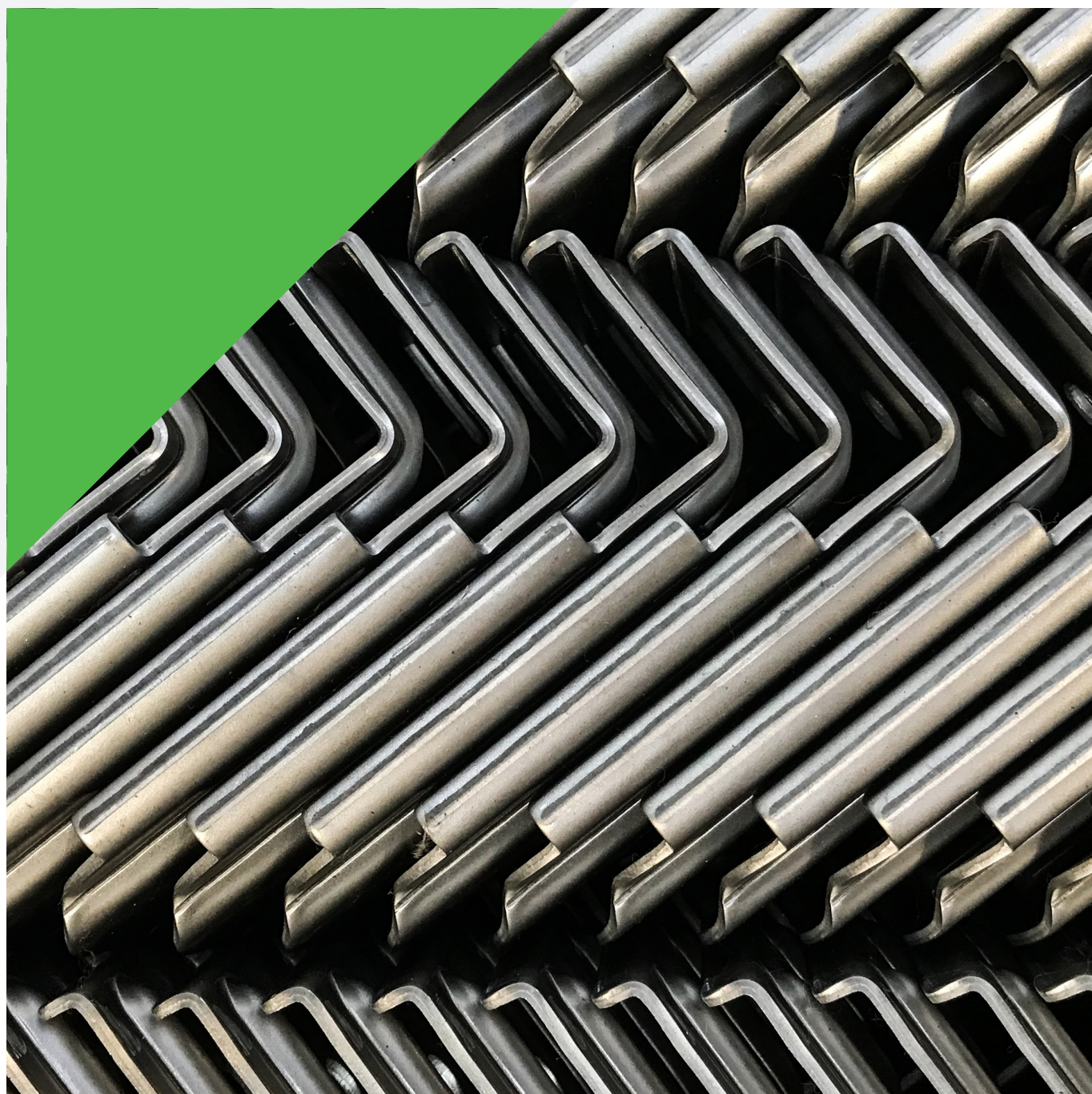


CASE STUDY

MANAGED IT SERVICES

► ARTHUR HOUGH
& SONS

Microsoft Partner



IT PARTNERSHIP WITH PINNACLE IS KEY TO ARTHUR HOUGH & SONS' CONTINUED **SUCCESS**



CLIENT PROFILE

Arthur Hough & Sons is a metal pressing business based in the heart of the Black Country manufacturing region, employing around thirty people at its Wolverhampton factory.

Established in 1881, Arthur Hough & Sons started life as a key manufacturer. It has become the UK's leading manufacturer of keys and key blanks, supplying to both lock manufacturers and the key replacement trade worldwide, including high-street key-cutting retailers.

In the 1970s, nearly a century after it was formed, the company branched out in a new direction, becoming a supplier to the suspended ceiling industry. Given the subsequent decline of the British mortice lock industry, driven by the advent of PVC doors, this proved a prescient move, and today this activity forms a major part of the company's business.



“OUR DEPOTS **ABSOLUTELY
DEPEND ON IT**, SO EVERY MINUTE
OUR INFRASTRUCTURE IS OUT OF
ACTION MEANS LOST BUSINESS
AND LOST REVENUE, BOTH FOR
PENLAW AND OUR CUSTOMERS.
TIME IS MONEY! THAT’S WHY
WE WOULD NEVER CUT
CORNERS ON SUPPORT.”



THE NEED FOR SPEED

For a company with its roots deep in the Victorian era, Arthur Hough & Sons shows an unceasing determination to stay ahead, recognising that, in a highly competitive industry, the strategic deployment of technology, both in production and in back-office functions is vital to staying out in front.

Managing Director Richard Evans explains, “**You can’t live in the past and rest on your laurels. The market is constantly changing. Competition is global and rising consumer expectations have had an impact on the business-to-business market, even in traditional industries like manufacturing.**”

He notes that the company acts as a wholesaler to its customers, which brings further pressure: “**We need to be quick off the mark in distributing to our customers, with next-day delivery, at the same time as keeping our costs down in the face of escalating raw material prices. Ensuring our office IT systems run smoothly and taking advantage of innovations in IT are essential to helping us run an agile and efficient business.**”



DAY-TO-DAY TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The business has relied on Pinnacle for many years for IT maintenance and support services. These include cover for the core server and storage infrastructure, the network and desktop environment and the Microsoft Windows platform.

This relationship has further strengthened with the retirement around eighteen months ago of Richard's co-owner in the business. Richard comments, "When Brian retired, he took his knowledge of IT and his keen interest in it with him. I stepped forward to take on responsibility for our IT infrastructure, recognising that I would need to rely on Pinnacle for support and guidance. I simply don't have the time to get involved in the day-to-day detail, so I knew that the relationship would become even more critical to our continuing commercial success."

For Richard, it made better business sense to have a team of experts at Pinnacle providing a flexible service, rather than looking to employ a dedicated in-house specialist.

He continues, "I have the reassurance of knowing that Pinnacle are always at the end of the phone should there be a problem. Backups, IT security, network support, general user support, our broadband... I can leave it all to Pinnacle as a single point of contact and get on with running the business. The Pinnacle helpdesk team quickly get to grips with any hardware or software issues and provide a resolution."

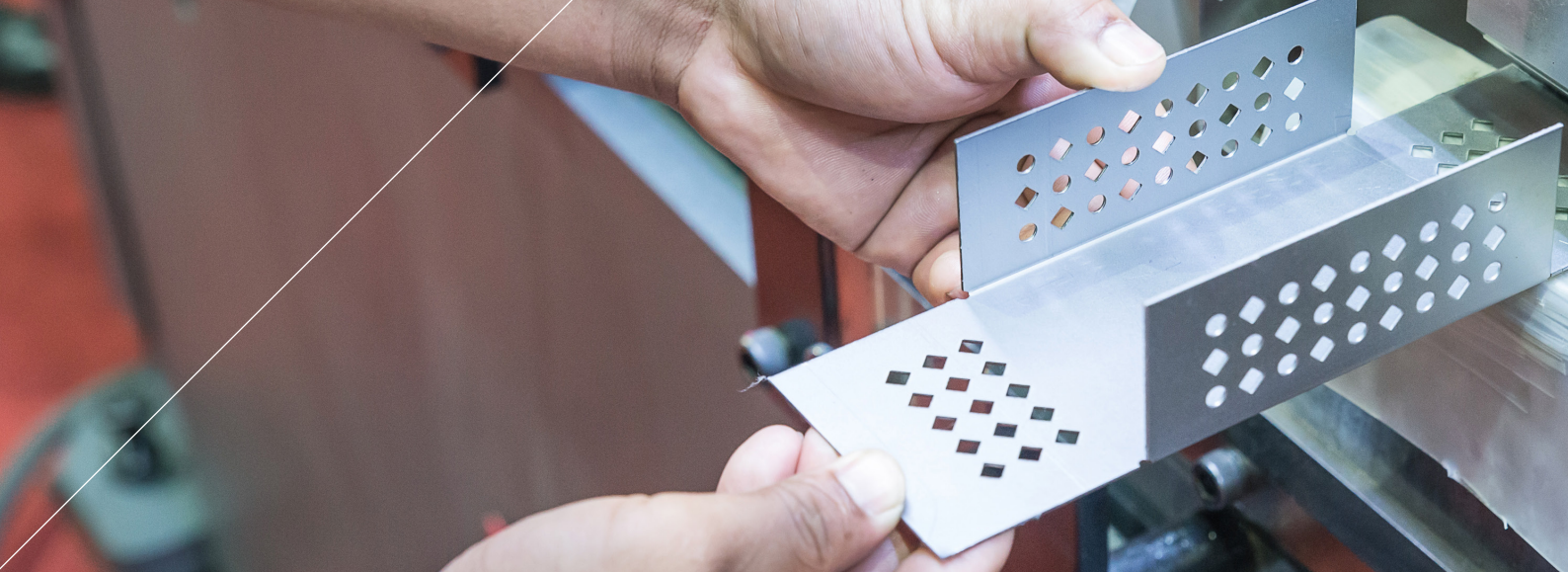
TAKING THE IT STRATEGY FORWARD

As well as day-to-day support, Richard knows that he can also depend on Pinnacle for infrastructure design and implementation. He says, "Rather than doing a massive leap every twenty years, we believe it's better for our business to make incremental changes every three to four years. Our Pinnacle Account Manager, Lee Myers, acts as our eyes and ears on the IT world and helps to keep us up to date. He identifies ways to improve the infrastructure on which our business depends absolutely."

The installation of two new HP business servers and 16 desktop PCs, plus routers, at the end of last year was a great success.

Richard says, "Pinnacle talked us through what would be involved to help us prepare. Our Pinnacle engineer then went the extra mile to do a thoroughly professional job in minimising any disruption and making the installation as seamless as possible. With the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) on the horizon at the time, he ensured that we were completely ready for it, with 'watertight' Sophos security software. He enjoyed trying to hack into our network for testing purposes!"





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FROM CAPEX TO OPEX

This latest infrastructure refresh was financed through a leasing contract. “It’s the first time we’ve gone this route,” observes Richard. “Pinnacle pointed out that with our commitment to keeping our IT current, it made sense to consider a leasing arrangement. It was a no-brainer, as it spreads the cost, assisting our cash flow, and makes our outgoings on IT predictable.”

Pinnacle also liaises with the multiple vendors who support other specialist areas of the IT infrastructure and manages the warranty process. For example, Pinnacle worked with the vendor of the company’s industry-specific production control system to ensure it would run smoothly on the new IT infrastructure. Richard says, “Pinnacle liaised with the vendor on our behalf to make certain that everything would be joined up when the new infrastructure went live. Once again, I could confidently leave it to Pinnacle to sort out.”

Again with Pinnacle’s help, Arthur Hough & Sons users migrated to Office 365 earlier this year. Richard is clear about the benefits, “This move has standardised our entire PC estate. All PCs now have the same specification and run on the same software version: update one and you can update them all. It’s a much easier way of keeping our PC estate consistent and up to date.”



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ADDING VALUE TO THE CUSTOMER

Richard and his team seek to exceed customers' expectations wherever possible. He gives an example: "In these brand-conscious times, certain customers want our labelling to match their corporate identity. With Pinnacle's help, we're looking to install a new printing system that will allow us to print bespoke customer labels in colour more efficiently. Pinnacle will source and install the printers for us and also the software to drive them."

He concludes, "There are a lot of press work companies like ours out there and this is just one more example of how Pinnacle is helping us to differentiate ourselves from others in the same line of business. It's one of the many reasons why, over the years, we've come to regard them as our technology partner, someone we can trust to help us resolve problems and seize opportunities."

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