



## Lanware achieves high standards in independent IT audit

Following a number of referrals, the Head of Information Systems at Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance (London Management) Ltd (MSILM) contacted Square Mile to audit their technology partner, Lanware. Having grown from a start-up to 400 people inside ten years, MSILM has had a number of challenges to overcome. Increasingly, the solution to their technology requirements has been to totally outsource the service to Lanware. Although this service is leading edge, in terms of technology practices and processes, MSILM has always questioned what goes on behind the scenes. To move to a total technology outsourced situation, MSILM needed to understand how the management and delivery of Lanware's service worked and compare it to industry standards and best practice.

Mitsui did not have the specialist skills to perform this in depth analysis and although Lanware's processes passed successive internal Sarbanes Oxley audits, the question remained "how good is Lanware compared to the rest of the industry". MSILM was integrating with the much larger head office organisation in Japan, and had to look strategically at their suppliers, defining the type of relationships they needed.

### About Square Mile Systems

Square Mile Systems enables organisations to improve the delivery of IT services and reduce operational costs. With a particular passion to help organisations manage their infrastructure better, Square Mile works in the heart of very large financial organisations dealing with their management problems and associated technology. In particular, they support companies and people to change their working practices, helping them move forward and function more efficiently. "The organisation has spent the last 5 years concentrating on how to improve infrastructure management and deliver best practice, typically around networks, servers, cabling and datacentres," explains David Cuthbertson, Square Mile Systems Founder. With a background as chairman of The British Computer Society ITIL specialist group (BCS-SMSG), focused on service management, Cuthbertson is ideally placed to advise on how to construct and manage services, deliver them and manage change effectively.

### Benefits

- An independent assessment of Lanware's practices
- Strategic partner reassurance
- Existing processes and practices endorsed
- Lanware's client fully appreciates the level of service
- A programme of continual improvement
- A benchmark against other outsourcing organisations
- A health check before next stage in development of relationship

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## A Mitsui Sumitomo Review

Lanware has enjoyed a relationship with MSILM that stretches back over 8 years. The partnership has transformed from providing supplementary infrastructure resources into a regular programme of technology outsourcing. However, there were a number of difficulties that needed to be addressed, and MSILM was challenged in getting to the root cause. Square Mile was qualified to undertake this review, as they had the right skills and knowledge to understand, in a short space of time, what makes a company tick. Both organisations were evolving, but not necessarily in the same direction. Square Mile was brought in to understand what Lanware do, and how they operate. Historically Lanware had always been cautious and careful about revealing anything about their processes and technology, as they valued them so highly.

## Benefits to Mitsui

Following MSILM's growth, they needed to understand the relationship and improve their supplier relationships. "As Lanware works closely with their business, MSILM needed reassurance that they had the right strategic partner," explains Cuthbertson. "What Mitsui now knows is that they have a partner that is employing leading edge techniques and processes which they would struggle to get from anyone else." MSILM needed to rubber stamp the relationship and identify how things could improve. Although Lanware provides a robust service that works everyday of the week, MSILM still needed to appreciate what was going on behind the scenes, and improve overall communication. Cuthbertson goes on to say, "The relationship between MSILM and Lanware has become strong, and MSILM has now identified that a different communication and reporting structure is needed to maximise the full potential of the supplier relationship with Lanware."



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## Benefits to Lanware

Lanware has been endorsed by an external third party, rubber stamping their existing processes and practices. "Lanware is leading edge in the way they integrate and co-ordinate tasks to deliver services. Square Mile has worked behind the scenes of most outsource companies, and there's generally a lot of running going on when you lift the lid, even if the service appears to be smooth on the surface. This isn't the case at Lanware," explains Cuthbertson. "The effort Lanware has put in to their back office systems to ensure they deliver services in a consistent manner is achieved. The difference is that MSILM now understands the quality of the service they are getting."

Square Mile recognises Lanware delivers a leading edge service compared to other IT organisations. "They have good people, and spend a lot of time getting good people. When we met them, this was soon very apparent," continues Cuthbertson.

## A thorough process

Square Mile was asked to look at the environment least visible to Mitsui, including the outsourced network infrastructure. With it hidden behind the datacentre activity in London and Paris, they wanted a specialist to review the working practices and the communications within Lanware and between the two organisations. MSILM needed an independent supplier assessment, giving them the confidence in the choices they had made. Following detailed interviews with both organisations, Square Mile understood how they had evolved, and how the relationship had changed. In particular, they analysed the infrastructure, how it was managed, and what the interface with the client looked like. "We listened and let them talk and then collected evidence of how the service is managed, controlled and communicated.

## Summary

As organisations look to outsource the tricky bits of their infrastructure, Square Mile believes Lanware is well positioned to move forward with strength and confidence. Cuthbertson concludes, "The

challenge for Lanware is how they grow and get their message to market. They have got something special, and a lot of people aren't aware of how co-ordinated their teams and their business are. I would recommend them."



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We then provided a report to MSILM with our views and recommendations," explains Cuthbertson. *"It was an assessment of Lanware's practices, and not Mitsui's."* With visibility of Lanware's organisation, across India, on site and in their head office in London, Square Mile analysed how they took on and managed tasks. *"I could appreciate the different components delivered by different parts of Lanware and how they communicated. I could then follow it through, understanding the customer facing service desk and the back office activity based in India, undertaking all the checks, the scheduling and overnight preparatory work,"* continues Cuthbertson. Square Mile needed to understand how Lanware was suitably set up to manage all aspects of change, how they deliver against it, how they manage risk, and what happens when things go wrong. Following the delivery of the report, all organisations met to discuss the action points and areas of recommendation.

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