

Case Study Knowall.co.uk Ltd

The NetPilot VPN solution from Equinet is proving extremely profitable for networking resellers such as Knowall.co.uk

Knowall has hit the ground running by supplying and installing NetPilot with ADSL to provide several multi-site and remote access Virtual Private Network solutions for a broad customer base.

End-users are experiencing the dual benefits of better performance at lower cost while Knowall generates revenue in three key ways – by selling the NetPilot units at a competitive margin, by charging for installation and by signing up the majority of their customers for a monthly maintenance and technical support fee.



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The Princess Royal Trust, the Medicentre group of high street clinics, the Muscular Dystrophy charity and Michael Hopkins & Partners architects – all these organisations have recently been supplied with NetPilot VPN solutions by Equinet reseller Knowall.co.uk

For Simon Froom (right) of Knowall, the introduction of the new NetPilot VPN and NetPilot Enterprise VPN products, has proven an excellent way of satisfying his customers and generating more business for his own company by selling more NetPilots. It has enabled Knowall to offer NetPilot VPN solutions on the back of a bundled ADSL service from the ISP Firstnet.

NetPilot from Equinet is the UK market leader in Internet server appliances, which are all-in-one, plug and play Internet access and email solutions. NetPilot VPN comes with the VPN software and bundled VPN clients as standard.

With more and more multi-site organisations recognising the cost, speed and – above all – security benefits of Virtual Private Networks, for Knowall the NetPilot VPN solution has come along at just the right time.

"The real selling point of NetPilot VPN is the sheer number of functions it comprises," says Simon Froom. "If the customer needs two or three of those functions, it's an easy sale. They may be interested primarily in the firewall and VPN and the clincher is the email server. Perhaps they want the FTP server and cache and it's the web access controls that convince them. There so much in the box that it's not a difficult solution to sell."

Princess Royal Trust Knowall recently installed a NetPilot VPN solution at the offices of the Princess Royal Trust, an umbrella organisation for a network of 100 carers' centres throughout the UK. Two large SQL databases sit on a server at the Trust's London HQ and constant access to the data is needed by staff at a Glasgow branch. Two home workers also require remote access to the information.

The Trust's old ISDN dial-up routers were regularly breaking down and huge bills were being run up by the open, costly ISDN line between London and Glasgow, so Knowall installed NetPilot VPN at each office bundled with ADSL. The remote access capability of this solution allowed the home workers to exchange information securely over the VPN.

The Trust's IT manager Chris Cutler (pictured, front) said, "It wasn't difficult to take Knowall's advice. This is one of those rare installations where you get better performance and you save money. In truth, it was pretty obvious we needed to go forward with this solution."

Medicentre Knowall has also installed NetPilot VPN at drop-in medical clinics run by the Medicentre company. The VPN-enabled server appliances have been installed at the Medicentre HQ in Wandsworth as well as at drop-in clinics in the City, in Oxford Street and at the Waterloo, Victoria and Euston rail stations.

"Medicentre wanted something that was higher speed, lower cost and far more resilient than their existing solution, which depended on an expensive 64K meg leased line," says Simon Froom. "ADSL with NetPilot VPN gave them a higher speed solution at a lower cost, even considering the cost of the NetPilot product and Knowall's installation and maintenance costs."

The SME benefits of NetPilot Applications such as these illustrate the compelling proposition that NetPilot has always offered for the small/medium-sized enterprise. With the addition of a VPN-enabled product, the opportunity for resellers to supply multiple boxes for multiple sites has increased greatly.

Simon Froom adds, "NetPilot has always been a great product for SMEs as it gives them many entry-level functions and a great many businesses do not need anything more than that. They really don't need to spend the thousands of pounds on Microsoft Exchange and a dedicated router, firewall etc. The functionality inside NetPilot will satisfy the vast majority of small businesses. Now with VPN, NetPilot really lends itself to linking offices and enabling information to be shared in an extremely secure and cost-effective way."

Simon says companies like his can generate revenue by offering NetPilot VPN in three distinct ways: they make a competitive margin on the product itself; they charge a one-off fee for installation; and three out of every four of their customers sign up for a monthly maintenance and technical support scheme. Under this scheme, Knowall commit to next-day repair/replacement of any faulty equipment. ■

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