Nominee: Storm Internet Ltd.

Nomination title: Putting the personal touch into hosting

- **What are your product's / solution's key distinguishing features and/or USP?**

Storm get to know their customers personally, giving them the opportunity to find out how they can help them grow. To help with this they've added a Hosting Growth Plan, reduced support wait times by employing more team members, and added more customisable service packages.

They've taken a lot of the technical load off of their customer's hands. Website transfers assisted by their migration team simplifies the move to them. Dedicated server customers receive this benefit too, with imaging technology designed to replicate their existing data and configuration onto their new systems - no downtime, no data loss.

Instead of set packages with options their customers may never use, Storm can create packages to meet their customer's needs. Contract terms can be negotiated without any penalties or hidden fees, and can be cancelled at any time - they will always work in favour of the customer.

Their new Hosting Growth Plan gives their customers free life-time hosting at a one-off rate, without compromising on any features or benefits. They also provide free consultations on services to meet a customer's future needs – Storm are a partner committed to their customer's growth, not just another service provider.

Their personnel are policy-bound to telephone customers when queries cannot be solved through their ticketing system. Senior support team members are automatically notified when an issue requires more than four customer responses to evaluate for potential problems or quality issues.

Submissions to the complaints category in their ticketing system are delivered both to the head of support and the Managing Director.

Top-tier SLA packages include a key account manager, and their unique Customisable Escalation Procedures which allows customers to specify the actions their engineers should perform when a monitored service changes state.

Customers on their dedicated hosting and new Storm Cloud packages are covered by their standard SLA, which includes server monitoring, standard network-based security, hard/soft reboots in under 10 minutes, OS updates and patches, and 100% network uptime, price freeze, and bandwidth guarantees, among others. Proactive maintenance is carried out when any monitored service or resource requires attention - they endeavour to keep their customers running at optimal capacity 24/7 without any intervention from them.

As such Storm give their clients the tools they need to succeed and grow. They believe their customer's growth is their growth which, they feel, is the true essence of exceptional customer service and the substance of great product quality.

- **What are the major differentiators between your product/solution and those of your primary competitors?**

Most customer queries are resolved in less than 4 hours and answered in seconds via their 24/7/365 LiveChat technical support service; they're one of the only hosting providers in the UK providing a true 24/7/365 LiveChat service operated by expert technicians and engineers as standard.

Each dedicated server SLA package comes with a hardware replacement guarantee, with the longest wait time only two hours, and the shortest 30 minutes - 50% faster than their closest competitors.

Customers on their most comprehensive SLA package (only £99.99/month) have access to the Managing Director's mobile number for unmitigated high-priority attention.

Storm are 100% UK owned and guarantee their customer's data will not go outside of the UK.

Storm offer unlimited bandwidth and provide upfront monthly pricing that's easy to understand.

- **What tangible impact has your product/solution had on the market and your customers?**

- **Please supply any supportive quotes and/or case study materials to demonstrate the value of this product/solution to your customers/partners.**

A Chinese gaming company needed a dedicated hosting solution helping cater for their European audiences. Servers fitted with fast internet connections and located in gamers' geographical vicinity were the top criteria contributing to the gaming experience.

While local dedicated hosting solutions were plentiful, the company realised they'd need a provider that could help them mitigate the intense system resource consumption associated with gaming applications. This, in turn, would ensure system stability and availability. And with DDoS attacks becoming a more frequent online phenomenon, security was also a pressing concern.

Storm realised that the successful implementation of their gaming solution would require more than just incisive ideas; clear communication would facilitate trust, and help them justify their decision to invest in the Storm Internet solution. In addition to well-wrought SLAs accompanying their top-tier support contract, Storm also provided them with the 24/7 mobile number of their Managing Director.

A load-balanced dedicated server configuration that could distribute loads evenly over a number of systems was proposed to, and accepted by, the client.

Servers were assembled and racked at their Tier 3 data centre, which is connected to the internet across multiple Tier 1 providers to deliver high speed and low latency 24/7 redundant connectivity to the UK and the continent. The data centre is ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 27001 certified.

The solution was configured to ensure that the traffic of any failed system(s) is delegated to functional counterparts, providing failsafe redundancy, delivering 100% uptime and a consistent gaming experience.

Commercial and custom security solutions were provided in addition to network-wide security solutions and perimeter DDoS protection. High-end Cisco hardware was acquired with the additional intention of improving the efficiency with which high traffic loads are handled. This further diminished the chances of hardware fail, thus complementing their 100% network uptime guarantee.

The results of Storm's load-balanced dedicated server solution provides gamers with low-latency connections, increased response times, and 100% uptime - and it has done so for these past four years since their Chinese client first approached them.

The client's dedicated server solution is backed up by a thorough SLA which, in addition to 24/7 LiveChat, telephone and ticket-based support, includes continuous 24/7/365 server and network monitoring. Engineers are notified when anomalies are detected, and carry out actions as determined by the client through Storm's Customisable Escalation Procedures.

With stability and a great end-user gaming experience in hand, the client has significantly grown their European audiences. The easy scalability of the load balancing cluster has made expansion an uncomplicated experience for the client, who today enjoys the peace of mind and confidence (complemented by an SLA that ensures an always up, always ready, and fast gaming experience) that growth is always just a matter of time.

Why nominee should win

•   Hosting growth plan gives SMEs free hosting for life, help's get their business started and is one less recurring bill for them to worry about.

•   Hardware replacement guarantee is 30 minutes

•   True 24/7/365 support – guaranteed a support team member and engineer who knows the clients system will be online 24/7/365

•   Customers on Storm's most comprehensive SLA package have access to the Managing Director's mobile number for unmitigated high-priority attention.

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