MyTights.com

makes do with a tight budget

MyTights.com is a London-based specialist online hosiery business, set up by UK entrepreneur Laura Godsal in 2000 to offer a wide range of high quality, designer brands of tights and stockings at competitive prices.

"The idea for MyTights.com arose out of a personal dislike of buying tights," Laura Godsal, founder and CEO, recalls. "It was either budget packs from the supermarket that lasted no time and felt horrible, or the horrors of a department store where everything looked the same. It was my dream to be able to buy good quality tights without going anywhere near a shop. The result is MyTights.com."

MyTights.com is a typical small business but unlike most it has already expanded overseas. With five staff workers in the London office and 2 remote employees in the United States, the company faces IT challenges similar to many larger organizations. With nearly 10 years of web experience, covering systems and network administration, Erik Fantasia was a great fit for meeting the IT needs at MyTights.com.

Humble beginnings

In the first few years, MyTights.com used the SonicWALL firewall solution, which was managed externally by their existing Internet provider. This was proving to be quite expensive.

For email communication, the company was using Sendmail/IMAP. This system was not easy to manage and did not offer almost any advanced features. Dealing with spam seemed particularly difficult.

"We used SpamAssassin when we were running Sendmail, but it was hard for users to train the filters and create their own whitea and black lists and rules, " Erik Fantasia says.

KERIO
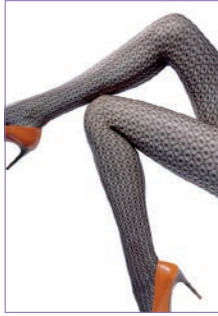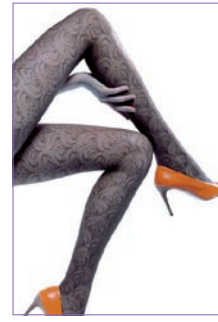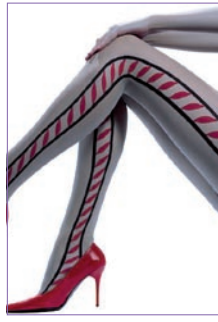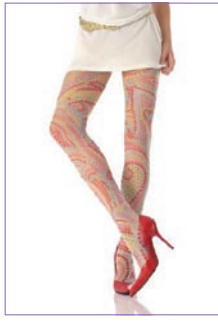
Erik Fantasia serves as a sole IT manager
of all of MyTights.com.

Firewall security comes first

MyTights.com is a true small business yet security of information on its website and uninterrupted access to email for receiving orders and sending confirmations are essential. The main criteria Erik Fantasia had set for the new firewall solution were cost-effectiveness and anti-virus control.

Linux firewall was a no-go

Following the move to another Internet provider, Erik decided that the company needed a new firewall solution. He wanted to bring the management of all the IT systems in-house to save money and retain more control.

The first option for Erik to look at was a Linux firewall. He liked its cost-effectiveness, but the administration was fairly complex and there was no integration with Active Directory. After reviewing Kerio WinRoute Firewall he was much happier. The impact of the product on MyTight.com's IT burden has been very positive.

"The integrated AVG AntiVirus plug-in works well," comments Erik. "The antivirus scanner and Active Directory integration are very useful. Our two remote workers in the States use the VPN fa-

cility to access the company files. The Kerio Administration Console is very slick; it's great! Anything you could need is there and it's all made very clear and simple to use."

The logs and statistics allow Erik to monitor daily firewall activity across the network and set limits accordingly.

Mail server comes next

After solving the firewall problem, Erik moved on to figuring out what to do about upgrading the existing mail server. The key considerations for a new email server were ease of use and advanced anti-spam capabilities. When looking for a new email management system initially, Microsoft Exchange was considered. "It was full-featured, but expensive," Erik concluded. It was clear to him that Exchange was good, but just not suitable for a small business like MyTights.com.

Kerio MailServer turned out to be able to deliver the advanced features he wanted, minus the high costs. This mail server met all his original requirements, namely for being cost-effective, easy to manage and feature rich.

"I like the groupware support, whizzy WebMail and the Active Directory integration that Kerio

MailServer has," he confirms. "I especially love the ease of use and flexibility of the advanced anti-spam features."

Doubling the sales

Running an online hosiery store in two countries on two different continents can be tough.

It is a very competitive environment – but MyTights.com has proved that with the right idea and the right tools it is possible to build up a successful and growing business.

MyTights.com is now the largest online hosiery supplier in the UK and their orders for premium hosiery from keen customers in Britain and United States have doubled year on year.

Kerio WinRoute Firewall

▶ Clientless SSL VPN

▶ Anti-Virus Gateway Protection

▶ Orange Web Content Filter Option

Kerio MailServer

▶ Integrated Anti-Spam

▶ Dual Anti-Virus Option

▶ Groupware Support

◆ KERIO