

Strengthening Security and Compliance Across RRG Group's Dealerships

RRG Group, a leading car dealership network across the North of England, is driving operational efficiency while strengthening cybersecurity. In partnership with Softwerx, the company implemented a 24/7 Microsoft-based Managed eXtended Detection and Response (MXDR) SOC, achieved the Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation and optimised Microsoft licensing to generate significant cost savings. These initiatives have modernised operations, reduced risks and ensured compliance with strict manufacturer and parent company standards.

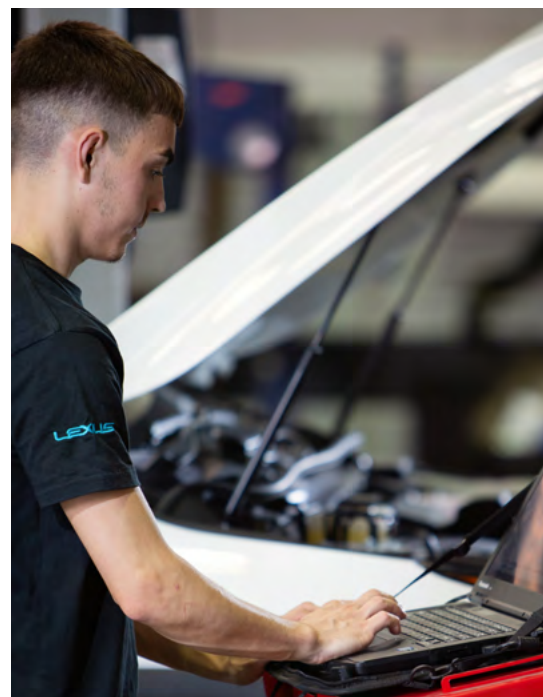
RRG Group: driving excellence across the North of England

One of the most successful car dealer groups in the North of England, RRG Group operates a network of new and used sites across the North West and West Yorkshire. Acquired by Marubeni Auto Investment (UK) Limited (MAIUK) in 2000, RRG Group has built a strong reputation as a franchise dealer representing many leading automotive brands including Toyota, Lexus, Skoda, Kia, Mazda, MG, Peugeot and Omoda|Jaecoo.

RRG Group sits alongside Norton Way and HPL Motors as part of MAIUK. Within this structure, RRG Group plays a central role in managing IT and security across the three organisations. Having expanded through the acquisitions of Norton Way in 2008 and HPL Motors in 2023, MAIUK's focus has now shifted toward organic growth, driving efficiency and profitability across its sites through smarter operations and continued investment in its people and processes.

Balancing cybersecurity resilience with audit readiness

RRG Group's legacy IT infrastructure included security solutions such as on-premises firewalls and antivirus protection, but lacked continuous 24/7 monitoring – something which was mandated by its parent company, Marubeni Corp. With a lean IT team supporting over 1,250 employees, implementing a round-the-clock Security Operations Centre (SOC) internally would have required significant team expansion and shift-based staffing, which was not practical or cost-effective for the business.



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Michael Mullarkey,
MAIUK Group IT Director, RRG Group



In addition to Marubeni's 24/7 monitoring requirements, key manufacturer partners such as Toyota support strict cybersecurity standards, including annual security audits and the attainment of the Cyber Essentials Plus certification. Non-compliance with these standards would jeopardise RRG Group's long-standing relationships with these brands.

"Our existing on-premises solution was becoming increasingly expensive, partly due to the volume of logs we needed to ingest for our manufacturer partners auditing requirements," says Michael Mullarkey, MAIUK Group IT Director, RRG Group. "We were looking for a more cost-effective way to meet these needs, while also implementing a 24/7 MXDR SOC to ensure compliance with Marubeni's rigorous auditing standards."

Mullarkey was also aware that the threat landscape was intensifying and that RRG Group needed to step up its security.

"The motor trade is a prime target for threat actors due to the high-value transactions involved. With margins as tight as 1–2%, it's crucial that we maximise the value of our IT investments and we simply can't afford the impact of a breach," says Mullarkey. "We were already operating within a Microsoft ecosystem, but needed a smarter way to leverage our licences and to manage log ingestion cost effectively."

Maximising Microsoft investments to minimise risk

After receiving a trusted recommendation for Softwerx from another motor retailer, RRG Group reviewed a number of security providers and ultimately chose Softwerx as its partner in 2017. With a Microsoft ecosystem already in place, Softwerx provided guidance on licencing and helped RRG Group to unlock greater value from its existing investment.

The partnership began with the deployment of Softwerx secure365, a 24/7 MXDR service built on Microsoft's security ecosystem, including Microsoft 365 Defender and Microsoft Sentinel. Designed for small and medium businesses, secure365 was a perfect fit for RRG Group, providing continuous threat monitoring and incident response from Softwerx's UK-based SOC.

"A Microsoft-first approach was an easy decision," says Mullarkey. "It's the platform our manufacturers use, our employees are familiar with the tools and it's widely adopted across the industry. From a business perspective, Microsoft offered the best fit to support our operations, our move to cloud and to help us get the most out of our technology investments."

As auditing requirements expanded and operational costs rose, RRG Group made a strategic shift to the cloud to improve resilience and reduce overheads. Softwerx played a key role throughout this transformation to enable RRG Group to adopt a cloud-first approach, for example migrating its identity services to Azure Active Directory and consolidating identity, device and authentication management across the organisation.

Later, in early 2025, RRG Group embarked on an infrastructure consolidation project to unify the IT systems of RRG Group, Norton Way and HPL Motors into a single, centralised environment. Softwerx supported the initiative end-to-end, helping to streamline operations, reduce the overall attack surface and simplify licence management across all three companies.

"The consolidation project would have cost us significantly more if we'd done it alone," says Mullarkey. "Softwerx's deep Microsoft expertise was invaluable. The team has an encyclopaedic understanding of the platform and a strong relationship with Microsoft, which gives us confidence that we're using our licences in the most efficient way."

Stronger security, easier compliance and reduced costs

Through its partnership with Softwerx, RRG Group has modernised operations, strengthened its security posture and optimised costs, all while meeting the demanding auditing requirements of its parent company and partner manufacturers. It has also successfully achieved the Cyber Essentials Plus certification required by Toyota and has the 24/7 MDR monitoring in place required by Marubeni Corp.

"It's not a matter of if you get breached, it's when. And when it happens, you need someone who knows your business and can act fast. That's what Softwerx enables – speed, familiarity and a decisive response," says Mullarkey.


Through intelligent log consolidation in Microsoft Sentinel, including the conversion of flow logs to auxiliary logs, RRG Group achieved significant cost savings without compromising the detailed records required for compliance.

"The biggest benefit of working with Softwerx is their people," says Mullarkey. "They have a stable, close-knit team so you build real relationships. They know our business and that makes managing security so much easier and more effective."

"Dealing directly with Microsoft can be challenging. That's where Softwerx really adds value. The team stays on top of every update, every licensing change and helps us make the right decisions to save money and stay secure."

Looking ahead with future-ready strategies

RRG Group remains focused on staying secure and agile, ready to respond swiftly to evolving business and compliance demands. Together with Softwerx, the company is exploring advanced capabilities in data security and compliance through Microsoft Purview, as well as leveraging AI-driven tools to boost operational efficiency and enhance cyber resilience. Future plans also include strengthening business continuity through disaster recovery testing and developing robust contingency strategies to ensure trading can continue, even in the event of a major technology outage.



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Your roadmap to resilience:

Take the next step with Softwerx

At Softwerx, we empower mid-market organisations to unlock the full potential of Microsoft Security.

Through expert consultancy, strategic guidance and hands-on support, we help businesses optimise their Microsoft infrastructure, security posture and licensing. Our UK-based 24/7 Security Operations Centre (SOC), alongside our flagship Managed Detection and Response (MDR) service, secure365®, leverages Microsoft 365 Defender and Microsoft Sentinel to deliver real-time threat detection, rapid incident response and intelligent security event management.

We make enterprise-grade cybersecurity both **accessible and affordable** — tailored specifically for the needs of security-conscious mid-market organisations.

Our approach guides you on a clear, tailored security journey — from initial audit to actionable outcomes — all shaped around your business's unique needs. Powered by Microsoft technologies and enriched by deep domain expertise, we take you through a structured process of discovery, assessment and expert advisory.

We transform insight into measurable impact — helping you build a resilient, future-ready security posture with confidence, clarity and the ability to protect what matters most while driving innovation forward.

Get in touch to explore how Softwerx can help secure and strengthen your business.

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