

# Blackfoot Case Study

## Huws Gray's M & A journey and the Need for a Cyber Security Partner

Huws Gray is the UK's largest independent builders' merchant, supplying building materials to trade and DIY customers from over 100 locations across the UK. With its customer base spread across North Wales, the North-West, Yorkshire and the West Midlands.

Huws Gray was backed, in 2019, by private equity firm Inflexion, who said at the time,

"We are delighted to partner with the team at Huws Gray as they embark on further growth. The business has been driven by an exceptional management team, which has grown from a standing start three decades ago, to become one of the largest independent builders merchants in the UK. The sector is at an exciting stage of development, with Huws Gray well placed to seek out and select add-on acquisition opportunities as it scales."

The decision to acquire Ridgeons Group in 2019 was the ideal opportunity to incorporate the market in East Anglia and was the start of a string of acquisitions including most recently The Grafton Group taking Huws Gray's annual revenue from £100M to well over £1B.

Acquisitions of all types are challenging. But there was one issue that needed a particular expertise: Cyber Security. Once Ridgeons had been integrated, the leadership team knew that this was the start of an M & A growth spurt which had massively changed their cyber risk profile. The question for the leadership team was: who to turn to?

"Blackfoot provided the most honest advice. They understood our business at a deep level, so we got the exact solution we needed. They provided amazing support throughout the journey and were totally flexible, earning our trust completely. That's why they've become a secure long-term partner of Huws Gray and why we are expanding our service portfolio with them."

**Nathan Draper** – Head of IT, Huws Gray Ltd

Nathan Draper, Head of IT, explained how he went through the process: 'The first thing we did was to speak to our payments system provider, Global Payments' security team. They gave us a list of five cyber security partners to review, and Blackfoot was the first name on that list.' Blackfoot stood out when pitching for the business. Draper explained: 'The five companies told us we needed different solutions with varying costs. Blackfoot was the only one who really took time to understand our needs and provided us with clear recommendations that were properly broken down. Immediately, they won our trust and made the

decision an easy one'

Huws Gray's Head of IT was also impressed when the discovery and implementation phases started. Working with Blackfoot's Head of Audit, the Huws Gray team were delighted with the depth of detail covered, and the advice provided, especially regarding the impending new security frameworks and understanding cyber risk in future acquisition targets. To make the experience even better, the Huws Gray team was particularly complimentary about Blackfoot's flexibility, happily rescheduling meetings when real life got in the way.

What struck Nathan most was the way Blackfoot operated and behaved as a partner: 'The other companies we spoke to tried to push us to buy services we just did not need. The Blackfoot team understood exactly what we required and that is what we got.'

## Your Trusted Cyber Security Partners



So how have things progressed? 'We could not believe that implementation took just 6 weeks. We are delighted and now have peace of mind, and everything has worked smoothly,' said Draper. Blackfoot also helped Huws Gray design and implement the new cyber security frameworks, so the business was ready for the future changes and additional M & A growth. He continued: 'things have gone so well; we have decided to work with Blackfoot on introducing virtual CSO and DPO systems. They did not need to pitch; they had shown us in their behaviour and results that we could implicitly trust them. They have become a secure long-term partner of Huws Gray.'

## **Why Blackfoot Could Be Your Ideal Partner.**

If you are struggling to understand how to manage your company's data and cyber-security, you are not alone. Most of our clients are senior IT and Finance professionals working for diverse businesses, across a range of industries. They came to Blackfoot with serious concerns about cyber-security and have worked with us to build a strategy that has successfully minimised risk for over twelve years. We act either as an outsourced cyber-security team or deliver targeted services to meet specific needs.

## **So why should you talk to Blackfoot?**

### **Leadership**

We are highly qualified to lead your cyber-security strategy

### **Clarity in complexity**

We keep jargon to a minimum. We will help you understand exactly what you need to do

### **A proven process**

Our 6-step process works, time and again. Giving you the highest security controls available

### **An outstanding toolset**

Our Security Framework Tool will deliver everything you need for a robust security system

### **A team of experts**

We recruit best in class, who think like attackers and deliver world-class protection for your business

### **Your relationship**

We pride ourselves on working tirelessly to ensure you like doing business with us

If you need help in managing your Cyber Security, call us today on 0845 805 2409.

Or email us at [info@blackfootuk.com](mailto:info@blackfootuk.com)

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