**Data#3**

Microsoft as a Service supports non-profit organisation in move to cloud

Data#3 Managed Services Case Study

Data#3

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The customer organisation helps support Australian not-for-profit organisations in their mission to provide ongoing support to the people and communities of which they service. Although small in size, the company must maintain a high level of security and accountability and adhere to very modest budgets.
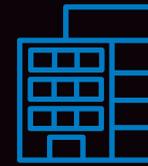
OBJECTIVE

With a core responsibility in supporting not-for-profit organisations, the company needed to improve flexibility and mobility by moving from a physical data centre with managed support, to a public cloud-based service.

APPROACH

The company issued a request for quote tender to potential suppliers, with the received submissions assessed against detailed criteria. It was judged that a Microsoft solution would best suit the company's needs, and Data#3 was engaged to assist with architectural elements and project delivery.

FUN FACT

By 2023, **50%** of enterprises will utilise a cloud managed service provider to run some portion of their hyperscale cloud deployments, up from **less than 20%** in 2018.

Gartner (2018), Public Cloud Infrastructure Operations and Management Is a Shared Responsibility Model [Online] https://blogs.gartner.com/rene-buest/2018/12/14/public-cloud-infrastructure-operations-and-management-is-a-shared-responsibility-model/

COMMENTS

"Here at Data#3, we know it is important to find a partner that is the right fit for your organisation, we want to understand the reasons and history behind your desired outcome, so we can help you succeed on your technology journey."

Carlos Gouveia, General Manager for Victoria & Tasmania, Data#3 Limited.

BENEFITS

- Infrastructure as a Service ("IaaS") platform built in Microsoft Azure
- Desktop as a Service ("DaaS") replaced existing infrastructure
- Migration to Office 365 for messaging and collaboration
- IT staff are free to work on projects to benefit staff and community
- Improved collaboration and productivity with Office 365
- Reduced organisational expenditure
- Removed dependency on external agencies for IT assistance

TECHNOLOGY

☑ Managed Services

The Background

The customer organisation helps support Australian not-for-profit organisations in their mission to provide ongoing support to the people and communities of which they service. Although small in size, the company must maintain a high level of security and accountability and adhere to very modest budgets.

The Challenge

Due to the size of the existing managed service, it was difficult to deploy new services. The existing IMiS platform was unsuitable to grow with the company, and IT staff spent a lot of time managing infrastructure. With budgetary constraints, it was vital that the company's IT team made every cent count, making the cost and distraction of physical data centres hard to bear.

"It can be difficult when there is a lot of overhead tied up in physical data centres. The requirements for constant funds, plus the time and effort needed to resize virtual machines and upgrade hardware can be detrimental to business if not facilitated correctly," said Data#3 General Manager for Victoria and Tasmania, Carlos Gouveia.

The secure gateway provides additional help, but stretching the budget to do more is an ongoing quest.

"We knew they were focussed on always giving the communities they serve the best value for money," said Gouveia.

Delivering a service was becoming more difficult, but there were some positives.

"Being a smaller company can often mean there are fewer legacy systems to work with," said Gouveia.

"That gave them the opportunity to be more agile, and it was decided to make the most of the opportunity by seeking an outcome that was both sustainable and scalable."

IT Outcome

Moving from on-premises to cloud is no small task, but due to government funding processes, the project had to be achieved very quickly, with just a four –month window from start to finish.

"Data#3 worked to an aggressive schedule, with clear communication essential to ensuring the success of the project," said Gouveia.

That communication included working with a variety of technology providers; Data#3 and Microsoft were both able to draw on existing relationships to assist in keeping the project on track.

"Across the project, there was a lot of collaboration, we worked with a lot of third-party vendors in terms of network infrastructure," said Gouveia.

"Our collaboration was built on communicating early, with a mechanism in place to deal with any challenges. Data#3 and Microsoft worked really well together and with the company's team."

An entirely cloud-based remodelled service and capabilities platform has been built, using Microsoft Azure as a platform.

Office 365 enables a collaborative working environment, with integrated office tools and communication. This is complemented by Microsoft's System Centre Configuration Manager (SCCM), meaning that staff can work securely from anywhere, on their own choice of device.

"We partnered with Microsoft to create a solution that successfully met the company's requirements, and could support their size," said Gouveia.

"As a result, the company can now deploy infrastructure as required and demonstrate a proof of concept in our development environment that we can tag and cost individually."

For government organisations, there are stringent rules in place about the location of data and approved cloud services. Microsoft Azure is an accredited data centre that ensures compliance with regulation.

"The partnership between the Data#3 and Microsoft team made the requirements easier to navigate and empowered staff to have confidence that the modern technology meets their requirements."

Business Outcome

For users, the adjustment to Office 365 was 'a big shift', but most staff were quick to make the most of the new environment.

"Like any change in technology, a change in how the company operated was needed, but the more that staff worked with the new technology, the more they could see the benefits," said Gouveia.

The most notable gains for individual users are the ability to work in a familiar online environment, with necessary files and resources available securely on any device. The IT department's planning and support has minimised adjustment challenges and, freed from managing infrastructure, they have been able to actively tackle projects that make the company more efficient.

Financial benefits were also quickly realised. For a small company that must achieve big results, the pay-as-you-go option made sense.

"Since the new environment was deployed, the company only pays when the environment is used and operational, meaning they have seen significant savings early on," said Gouveia.

There has been some culture shock for the company, with the ease of use a contrast to the previous on-premises model. The company has also had to adjust to a different funding model for its IT consumption.

"Many organisations are structured around projects, development and system lifecycles. When the company made a shift from CAPEX to OPEX, their smaller size meant they were able to achieve success a lot sooner than other organisations," said Gouveia.

Conclusion

For others considering a similar project, a well-defined vision and well-managed communication are the elements that give the best chance of success.

"You must have a clear idea of what your end state will be as an organisation, what your future operational model would ideally be, and how much tolerance you have there."

"Without that clarity, compromises made after the fact can cause rework and additional cost."

The experience for the company was positive, and as such, Data#3 was enlisted to manage their workloads for the next three years, as well as provide assistance on future projects.

"Here at Data#3, we know it is important to find a partner that is the right fit for your organisation, we want to understand the reasons and history behind your desired outcome, so we can help you succeed on your technology journey."

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