

Data#3 Customer Story

Morgans Financial

Morgans empowers a future-ready workforce
with IT managed services from Data#3

Data#3

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Objective

Morgans needed to enhance its IT services to better support its people 24/7, by progressing to a hybrid working environment, and improving its procurement and management services.

Benefits

- Streamlined systems to reduce complexity
- Improved speed and reliability
- Strengthened security posture
- Maximised return on technology investment
- Flexibility to scale technology to meet business needs
- Enhanced business continuity
- Effective collaboration
- Better supported decision-making

Testimonial

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Matt Neubauer, CIO,
Morgans Financial Limited

Approach

The in-house team evaluated multiple providers and performed reviews in line with their policies to deliver a series of projects for digital transformation. Morgans selected Data#3 due to its previous relationship, demonstrable experience and shared culture.

Solutions & Services

- ✓ Cisco Pure Flash Stack
- ✓ Cisco Meraki SD-WAN
- ✓ Microsoft 365 + Windows 10
- ✓ Microsoft Teams
- ✓ Microsoft Surface devices
- ✓ Veritas NetBackup
- ✓ Managed Services
- ✓ Project Services

Project Highlight

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The Background

Morgans is a full-service stockbroking and wealth management network, with over 500 authorised representatives and 950+ staff servicing more than 240,000 clients across Australia.

With technology playing an ever-growing role in the organisation, Morgans needed a true partner that would help them to harness their full potential. They wanted to work with someone they could trust to handle the day-to-day, while they focused on business growth activities.

The Challenge

From modernising and improving efficiency to providing new services, the IT team at Morgans is on a continuous quest to fulfil its role as a business enabler. For CIO, Matt Neubauer, it is important that while overcoming the everyday challenges of managing IT, that they could also see the big picture and recognise progress.

“When we first worked with Data#3 some five years ago, we were running Lotus Notes, we were developing systems in-house, we had a data centre four times the size we see today. It was very much an internal cloud environment, and cloud wasn’t a thing then.”

Rather than source technology partners for every individual project, something that would lack continuity and potentially drain time and attention, Neubauer was keen to develop a more enduring relationship. Although the right technical capability was a given, it was clear that an IT provider needed to be a strong cultural match, and to mesh well with Morgans.

“We were reliant on the skills, expertise and advice of our IT partner, and we needed them to play a role in guiding our direction from a technology perspective. Technology is a never-ending story: by the time you have finished one thing, you are already looking at something else, so it is a fast-moving space. You need to have access to trusted advice.”

As the role of IT grew and evolved in the business, and users’ needs went beyond the traditional 9-5 workday, the role of the in-house IT team adjusted to match. Rather than simply add out of hours support, Neubauer evaluated how to best use the strengths of his own team, while ensuring that the day-to-day operations were covered.

“When we were looking at our capability at that point, we decided as a business what was our strategic direction and where to invest our time, funds and resources. We decided that our internal focus should be where we can differentiate, and looked at the things we could do very well that were unique to Morgans.”

“When it came to managing our data, network and servers, we looked at using a partner we could trust that not only had the capability, but also the flexibility to scale when needed.”

The IT skills shortage added weight to the decision to seek a managed services solution to fit the Morgans business environment. While [76 percent of Australian businesses are looking to hire skilled IT staff in 2024](#), half are finding themselves having to outsource overseas, with cyber security leading the hard-to-fill areas of expertise.

“We looked at the times we needed to cover, and we would have had to double our team to facilitate it, because we can’t cover both out of hours and business hours. We were not willing to compromise on keeping it onshore.”

“We wanted all of the capabilities and resources to fit, we needed data sovereignty to remain in Australia, and we wanted company culture that matched ours. We wanted the way we were interacting to feel like our partner was just an extension of our internal resources, and for it to feel organic as we moved to a partnership model for managed services, so Data#3 was a natural fit,” explained Neubauer.

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The Outcome

Morgans has significantly benefited from Data#3's expertise across several business transformation projects, incorporating a suite of technology from Cisco, Microsoft, and Veritas to better support the hybrid workplace.

Leveraging the depth of knowledge and experience within this partnership, the strength and value of their relationship have become evidently invaluable. From migrating to Microsoft 365 and implementing Windows 10 to deployment of a Cisco Meraki SD-WAN and adoption of Microsoft Surface devices, the in-house IT team and Data#3 teams have worked shoulder to shoulder towards common goals.

“This gave us confidence when we were proposing a managed services partnership. We have similar values, and we are both Queensland based, so there is a lot of alignment there. The board felt very comfortable using Data#3 as a partner because they had already shown we would be in safe hands,” recalled Neubauer.

The transition to a managed services model was a process that Neubauer felt required experience and a well-designed process. As it was, the collaborative approach and tested Data#3 methodology meant that for most of the business, the managed services handover was a non-event.

“With each new development in our technology journey, it was as if the business didn’t know anything had changed. Someone working in one of the branches would be none the wiser. That was exactly what we hoped for – it is like when you turn on the tap and there is no hot water, you might curse the plumber, but you don’t thank them for every day it works perfectly. It is the same with IT, it is when something is wrong that you hear about it, so when it is quiet, we are happy.”

For the in-house IT team, though, Neubauer noted there were some more noticeable outcomes, including reduced stress and more time to focus on high value business enhancement activities.

“The biggest measurable difference was a reduction in incidents, especially those caused by patching limitations. These often crop up out of hours, and with the size of our team, we didn’t have people looking at patching on weekends and early mornings. Data#3 flags those things as they occur and by the time we walk in, most are already remediated.”

“It is great to avoid that Monday morning firefighting, because that sets the tone and used to consume time. Which also meant our people sometimes had to wait to access systems they needed to do their jobs.”

Amidst an increasingly complex cyber security landscape and facing ever more sophisticated threats, this important security measure was among the improvements that Neubauer was clear should not be underestimated. Central to the [Australian Signals Directorate \(ASD\) Essential Eight](#) measures, prompt patching greatly reduces vulnerabilities and cuts the window of opportunity for cyber criminals.

“It is becoming critical really in terms of the breaches we are seeing in different vertices, and once again we are very comfortable with Data#3’s security posture and the investment they are making to protect their customers’ data.”

Procurement, too, is an area where the Morgans team has welcomed Data#3's expertise. Having access to a wealth of specialists has helped to make sure that investments are well planned and that the financial business can get the best return for its technology spend.

“We do our own research and keep a finger on the pulse of what’s happening in the market, but it is so fast moving that we can’t be across it all. Another value that Data#3 has given is that they are a large business with specialists in different vertices, so we can engage and get them to do a market scan, or to do research on our behalf. We have done this a number of times when we have not known the solution but can articulate what we need to achieve,” said Neubauer.

“Then, when we have worked out the right outcome, they work with a range of vendors, and can negotiate to get us the best return on investment and manage our assets efficiently.”

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Conclusion

To get the optimal outcome from an ongoing relationship, especially in a managed services scenario, Neubauer said that a true partnership is necessary. That, to him, means feeling that they want Morgans to achieve a successful outcome just as much as he does, and will place that above their short-term goals.

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On occasion, that approach has meant that Data#3 has sometimes chosen not to take on a project, instead connecting Morgans with their extensive network of technology partners.

“There have been some instances where we haven’t used them based on the advice they have given. For example, when we have been working on a technical solution that isn’t one of their strengths or in their wheelhouse, our account manager will call out that it isn’t one of their specialities and will recommend a partner with the right specialised skills for the project. There are a lot of vendors who are keen to get whatever business they can, even if outside their skillset, which leads to subpar results.”

“If Data#3 is engaging on a project, they won’t accept anything below an excellent outcome, what they commit to achieving, they will make good on that commitment.”

The true test of a partnership, concluded Neubauer, is knowing that you have an extended team of resources that are every bit as much there for you in difficult moments as they are to share in your successes.

“Data#3’s strength boils down to the definition of a solid partner, someone that you can call when things don’t go well and they’ll pick up the phone, they’ll be in your corner to make things right with a mutually agreeable outcome. They will go to bat for you.”

“Our Data#3 Account Manager has been on some internal calls for Morgans looking out for Morgans’ interests even if they are not necessarily of benefit to Data#3. They are collaborative, transparent, and they tell things as they are,” concluded Neubauer.

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Data#3 and partners

Data#3's [world-leading technology partners](#) are the building blocks on which Data#3's solutions and services are created. When paired with Data#3's proven skills and expertise, our partnership-approach ensures our customers can achieve their desired technology and business outcomes to deliver the digital future.

Data#3

