World Class Fund Manager engages Huon IT for Major Infrastructure & Disaster Recovery Upgrade

Ausbil Investment Management Limited is an Australian equities specialist with approximately $11 Billion in funds under management. Established in April 1997, Ausbil's core business is the management of Australian equities emerging leader investment portfolios for major superannuation funds, institutional investors, and master trust clients.

During the past 14 years Ausbil Investment Management Limited has been one of Australia's highest performing equity specialist boutique managers and has demonstrated an impressive consistency in delivering superior returns through its style neutral process.

Time for Change

Ausbil Investment Management Limited has always understood the importance of solid IT to staying on top of their industry. They have 38 staff members in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Brisbane, and need to be able to provide leading-edge IT across multiple locations.

"We refresh our IT infrastructure every 3-4 years to keep things current and stable, to always have a best practice reliable system for our clients," says Laurence Burford, Ausbil's IT Manager. "We are a fund manager who need to be active in the stock market, if we experience downtime it can be a disaster."

Why Huon IT?

In 2010, Ausbil began the search for a new provider that would take months to find the perfect fit.

"We knew that to stay relevant and effective, we needed a new partner," Burford says. "So we went looking for a technology partner that could help us maintain our competitive edge."

Burford says that Huon IT was the right choice because of their size: small enough to provide personalised service, but large enough to keep up with Ausbil's sophisticated demands.

"I was wary of bigger firms, as I knew we would be a small fish in a big pond with them. After meeting with Huon IT, I knew right away that they had the right combination of expertise and personal service that we needed," says Burford.

"It's absolutely critical for us to have reliable systems – as we are a fund manager who need to be active in the stock market, if we experience downtime it can be a disaster. The Huon IT solution gave us exactly what we wanted."

- Laurence Burford,
IT Manager of
Ausbil Investment
Management Limited

- Private Cloud solution for multi-office organisation
- Sophisticated Disaster Recovery system

- Best of breed infrastructure
- Zero business downtime

- Scalable solution for future business growth
- Tailored, personal service

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Virtualisation and OS Upgrades

The project with Ausbil began with virtualisation, application and operating system upgrades.

Huon IT deployed VMware vSphere as the platform for virtualisation. A HP Blade hardware solution was utilised to consolidate server hardware in a tightly-managed enclosure, with a single point of management for all servers. In conjunction, a SAN (with failover functionality) served as the storage platform.

Keeping the business live and free of interruptions during the project was a major priority. Huon IT installed the new system alongside the current infrastructure, connected to the same network. This allowed the migration to take place with no downtime during work hours. While simultaneously, all application and operating system upgrades were performed.

"Our staff didn't even notice that there was a major change going on behind the scenes, which was a great reflection of the detailed planning that went into the project," Burford adds.

Improved Disaster Recovery

Perhaps the biggest benefit of the project was incorporating new Disaster Recovery protocols.

With a high rate of change from the live stock market and stringent confidentiality requirements, Ausbil ensure they have a fast and safe way to recover should a disaster – natural or otherwise – occur.

With a very specific solution in mind that would allow the DR environment to work from any location, Huon IT customised the configuration so that everything worked according to the specs outlined – and more efficiently than Ausbil's previous solution.

"Before Huon IT, it took 2-3 hours for system recovery – now it can be done in under an hour," says Burford.

Conclusion

"Huon IT were a pleasure to work with," says Burford. "Our systems are now far more flexible; if we undergo growth, it's easily scalable, and it's also a lot easier to implement new systems on the virtual platform. Our Disaster Recovery system has been simplified and is more efficient."

"All in all, we got exactly what we wanted."

▶ THE BENEFITS
Consistent applications and computing environment performance to all staff across the group, regardless of location
An update of operating systems to current versions, ensuring that Ausbil is eligible for continued high support levels from vendors
Business agility improvements through flexible server and storage infrastructure which will remove, wherever possible, the risks associated with single server or component failure
Improved business continuity through streamlined disaster recovery replication strategies
Zero business downtime, with no staff interuptions

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- Laurence Burford, IT Manager

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