Valid helps CSU en Tzorg with complete IT make-over in record time

CSU is an innovative cleaning services company that has grown explosively since its inception in 1968 and at the same time keeps its character as a family company. The company finds great value in the human dimension. Because it wanted to provide its own people - including those of its sister organization Tzorg - with better IT support, a complete makeover of the infrastructure was needed. Due to Covid-19 situation in the spring of 2020, the rollout took place not in three months as planned but in five days.

"If you want to go to the cloud and you are looking for a mid-sized organization to outsource your IT to, I would definitely put Valid on the list." **John Adegeest, Director ICT**

The challenge

When John Adegeest took office as director of ICT at CSU in June 2018, all the servers still fit in one room. They were placed four racks. The equipment was in dire need of replacement, he explains. There was a budget to buy new hardware, but Adegeest wanted more. "It stands to reason nowadays that ur thousand colleagues who work with digital resources should be able to access the network anytime, anywhere with any device. Our managers are constantly on the move. They can't be expected to have to go to the office at the end of the day to do their paperwork. That also applies to the coordinators at Tzorg who are often in the district, close to their clients and employees."

Adegeest's ICT team is also dealing with a growth of about ten percent; a growth that CSU and Tzorg together experience every year. This means that there are more and more users, devices and data. The existing static environment could hardly cope with that. So a solution was needed that would offer more flexibility, making it easy to scale up in capacity. However, that would also require an investment to increase the level of knowledge in house, the director realized. "Moreover, the capacity of the ICT department is too small to keep all that running 24x7."

The System and Network Administration team itself therefore chose another option: outsourcing. Together they knew exactly what they wanted: "A medium-sized partner where you don't join the back of the queue, but where you still receive personal attention. We made inquiries in our personal network and consulted benchmarks such as that of Giarte. On this basis we made a shortlist and invited candidates for a presentation. In the end, we chose one to go into depth with. That was Valid."

Good feeling

Adegeest immediately had a good feeling about Valid. That had to do not only with shared values such as human, innovative, reliable and personal, but also with the common view of collaboration. "You have to strengthen each other. CSU and Tzorg want to work more efficiently. If Valid successfully facilitates us in this, it strengthens their market position. This in turn benefits us, because it puts Valid in a better position to offer continuity."

Yet Adegeest was not only guided by the heart, but also by the head. "We made four reference visits. At a social housing organization, an accountancy firm, a manufacturing company and a government agency. After that we were definitely convinced."

The solution

CSU was looking for a scalable, flexible and reliable cloud solution. It found it by switching to Azure, Microsoft's public cloud. All the on-premise ICT systems of both CSU and Tzorg are now housed there.

A new workplace concept was also introduced: fleXpace®. The idea of fleXpace in combination with Microsoft 365 is that users - regardless of their location - can view, share and edit data and documents. A solution that allows users to work like at the office, but at their own location, from any device. FleXpace also makes it possible to combine apps from Microsoft 365 with systems that already exist in the organization.

Stress test

The rollout of these solutions would be incremental, in a timeframe of about three and a half months. Enough time for any problems to be uncovered and fixed. Users would also undergo training before going live. Due to the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, however, everything went completely differently than planned.

Adegeest: "From one day to the next all thousand employees had to work at home. Together with Valid, we finished the job in just five days. That was not without its pitfalls, but through sheer hard work we succeeded. In a relationship you like to be in a happy flow, but it can also be a bit of a squeak. This was a stress test right from the start, and we came out of it just fine."

Advantages of working together

In the new situation, people from CSU and Tzorg can work more efficiently. According to Adegeest, it is now even possible to be active from the car, by using the cell phone as a hotspot. "Being able to work and do registrations safely at all times on the road, at home or at a municipal office is essential for us."

To support mobile working, CSU is now also deploying laptops. The logistics are left to Valid. Valid brings ready-to-use devices to the location.

Valid is also responsible for the inventory, implementation, optimization and management of Azure and fleXpace. Adegeest: "This also included the synchronization of all data, replacing the network and taking over the management step-by-step. That guarantees the security and continuity of our IT. That is important, because ultimately 27,500 people want to receive their salary at the end of the month. So IT just has to be in order."

The combination with Office 365 products has great added value for CSU and Tzorg. The reason is that Microsoft's portfolio is very extensive. Office 365 products are also continuously updated, which means that users always have the latest functionalities at their disposal.

Another important benefit of the collaboration between CSU and Valid is that ICT now has more time to focus on answering user questions. "We man the first-line service desk ourselves, because we believe in the power of contact with our own people," says the director.

Daily contact

The move to the cloud was a giant leap, according to Adegeest. There is still almost daily contact between CSU and Valid about fine-tuning. It's about optimizing capacity, for example. The idea of the cloud is to pay for use. "At night, for example, we need less capacity than during the day, so then we scale down. Part of the capacity is always needed. You can set the rate for that. That saves on costs.''

Both parties are constantly looking for opportunities to innovate and have periodic consultations about this. "We then discuss what is going on with both of us or something that has our common interest. One theme we have already discussed is data science. Valid is strong in that. We also talk several times a year about the state of the IT infrastructure of CSU and Tzorg. Furthermore, four times a year we go over the status of our collaboration with Valid."

Adegeest can recommend Valid to everyone: "If you want to go to the cloud and you are looking for a medium-sized organization to outsource your IT to, I would definitely put them on the list. Because Valid is an organization where, as with us, it's all about the people first and foremost."

Company profile

CSU…
- is a cleaning company established in 1968 by Cor van der Heijden. At the outset, he dreamed of an organization with a hundred staff members.
- In 2020, CSU employed approximately 16,000 people.
- CSU is active at bungalow parks, in the (food) industry, offices, stores, department stores, hotels, public transport and more.
- The company operates nationwide, but is strongly locally oriented, with ten locations in Amsterdam, The Hague, Groningen and Maastricht, among others. The head office is in Uden.
- In 2019, the company went through the €400 million revenue mark.
- CSU has been named Top Employer Netherlands eight times in a row by the Top Employers Institute, the worldwide authority on recognizing excellence in HR policy.
- Innovation and corporate social responsibility are of paramount importance.

Tzorg…
- is nationally the largest provider of support and individual guidance within the social care law.
- Has contracts with more than 300 communities in the country.
- Exists since 2009.
- Had over 10.000 employees in 2020.
- Helps nearly 50,000 clients who can live longer at home thanks to household support from Tzorg. This help can be anything from cleaning the bathroom, tidying up or vacuuming, to having a chat or just offering a listening ear.
- Has a revenue of around €150 million.
- Innovation is also a priority at Tzorg. For example, a trial of robotic vacuum cleaners began this year to make life more pleasant for employees and clients.

Giarte benchmark

An important reason for CSU to choose Valid is the score in the Giarte IT Experience benchmark (formerly outsourcing performance). Valid Managed Services achieve high scores in this benchmark. Valid receives particularly good marks for customer-oriented competencies such as transparency and professionalism. The number of respondents who call themselves super fans is rising: from 20 percent in 2019 to 27 percent in 2020.

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