

CASE STUDY



The Client:



Top Restaurant Group Slashes IT Costs, Adds Functionality with Cloud based Office 365

Facing an expensive technology upgrade with a small IT staff, LaRosa's chose Interlink Cloud Advisors to move the pizza chain to Office 365, giving LaRosa's reliable, secure email while cutting licensing fees.

In today's competitive restaurant environment, LaRosa's, the iconic chain of 64 family pizzerias serving neighborhoods in Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky, Southeast Indiana and Dayton, cannot rest on its 60-year-history. Instead, it must convince its guests to come back again and again by offering great food and service that makes them smile. This makes communication systems a key business enabler. Over 20 years ago, LaRosa's famously mastered phone communication with its customer base by offering its "one number" ordering service. Guests dial one phone number to order from any LaRosa's location they choose. The system streamlines guest orders and improves service – one of its key advantages in the marketplace.

However, communication between LaRosa's corporate office and its 48 franchise owned pizzerias proved more challenging. Franchise owners did not have corporate email accounts and instead used personal email, hampering communications due to unsupported and disparate environments. When Kyle Welch, LaRosa's Director of IT, noticed that the \$138 million-in-revenue company and its 3,500 employees were running out of corporate email storage, he knew he faced a critical upgrade, one that would require outside help to ensure success. Welch also knew he faced an opportunity to improve communications with franchise owners by offering a common email platform – as long as it fit in the budget.

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"With a small IT department, we needed a partner to help us explore our options and narrow them to the solution that best fits our needs and budget," Welch said. LaRosa's chose Interlink Cloud Advisors as a partner because of its extensive experience and knowledge of Microsoft's technologies and programs.



Welch had more than just an email storage problem. The company also faced the end of life for much of its server infrastructure, complex Microsoft licensing, ever-increasing data storage costs and an expensive upgrade of its on premise Exchange Server. With a lean IT team, upgrading Exchange alone would be a major project, one that could disrupt operations and potentially impact revenues if not handled correctly.

"One of the biggest costs was backup because we would do a brick level back up, which gave us the ability to restore individual email boxes, and a full off-site Exchange backup in case Exchange went down," Welch said. Additionally, "our hardware wasn't under warranty, so we were looking at replacing it," he said. "Since we didn't have redundancy at that time, we were considering clustering two Exchange servers. But the costs were astronomical."

The Interlink team walked Welch through possible options for migrations and single sign on, and gathered information to tackle the larger business problem: Was it better and more cost effective to continue with an on premise email system or was it more beneficial to move to the cloud?

Interlink CloudLink Analysis

Interlink used its CloudLink process to determine which path to take. Interlink first does a technical assessment to make sure a company can technically move to the cloud or a hosted environment and to make sure it aligns with the company's business objectives. Then, Interlink provided a detailed cost return-on-investment report. After showing the executive team the numbers, "it was a no brainer to proceed with Office 365," Welch said.

Interlink's analysis and knowledge of Microsoft partner program incentives helped LaRosa's refine its licensing, and acquire Microsoft funding and rebates that shaved 50 percent off the project cost. "Interlink showed us how our traditional licensing agreements needed to change so we could reduce ongoing licensing costs even further," Welch said. "That's something other systems integrators don't address."

LaRosa's used Interlink's Cloud Atlas deployment methodology and documentation as the roadmap for the Office 365 implementation. The company received a written plan explaining how to get ready for a cloud migration and a project plan outlining who would own what part of the migration to make sure everyone was on the same page.

Additional documentation included how to set up the new system, how to cut users over and a communication plan IT managers use to tell employees what was going to happen and when. Interlink also provided tip sheets and training guides so employees could solve basic problems instead of calling the help desk.

Moving to the Cloud with Office 365

Microsoft Office 365 brings together cloud versions of Microsoft's communications and collaboration products: Microsoft SharePoint Online, Exchange Online, and Lync Online, with the latest version of its Office desktop suite and companion web applications for businesses of all sizes. Office 365 features robust security, IT-level phone support, geo-redundancy, disaster recovery, and business-class privacy controls and standards.



To move LaRosa's to Office 365, Welch oversaw a phased-in hybrid deployment, migrating corporate departments one at a time after the pizzerias closed each night. "We converted a department each night, which allowed us to address any user issues in the morning," Welch said. "Once we got the corporate users cut over, then we incorporated franchise owners, migrating them in a single weekend."

"The entire implementation went extremely well and took just three weeks," he said. "I was ecstatic and pleasantly surprised it went so well."

Results: Avoid Exchange Upgrade, Slash Licensing Costs, Gain Redundancy & Functionality

By moving to the cloud, LaRosa's did not have to upgrade or maintain an Exchange environment for email, avoiding a \$30,000 upgrade. Office 365 also eliminated outside spam filtering, saving \$3,600 a year for the same service that was included in Office 365, and reduced offsite backup costs, saving \$4,800 annually.

The entire Office 365 application costs about \$4,000 less than the direct costs savings, and LaRosa's gets all the benefits of the cloud including multiple installations of Office per user, mobile Office, data loss prevention, mail archiving and global redundancy it didn't have previously.

"One of the driving factors for us to move to Office 365 was the need for more email capacity," Welch said. Today, each user has 50 gigabytes for email, 50 times what they had with the on premise Exchange server. "It's a big difference in cost savings," he added.

In addition, LaRosa's can add franchise owners and more employees without adding hardware or software as the chain moves into new markets. Franchise owners now have access to a corporate email account, with the ability to access email through a kiosk computer at the store and on their mobile devices.

"I've worked with other IT integrators, and I really truly believe Interlink has the brightest guys in the business," Welch said. "They are very knowledgeable, trustworthy and when they say they will get something done, they do."



CONTACT US TODAY to discuss your organization's Office 365 needs.
Call **+1 (513) 444-2020** or email **sales@interlink.com** for a free consultation.

Interlink Overview

Interlink Cloud Advisors partners with their clients to understand how technology can be utilized to reach business goals and leverage the cloud's extraordinary economics. They help their clients evaluate which workloads make sense to migrate to the cloud and ensure that the timing is right. Keeping current on new technical, business and licensing offerings as well as Microsoft funding programs, Interlink is able to create return on investment models that work in the real world. Interlink then helps deliver the ROI by executing on the actual migration or upgrade including project planning, tenant creation, identity management, data migration, training, and support. [Learn More at www.interlink.com](http://www.interlink.com)

