Secure cloud and high value support enables Red Snapper Group to operate with confidence in sensitive markets

Serviced Cloud Customer Case Study

RedSnapper Group

Background

The Red Snapper Group (RSG) is a market leading provider of staffing, media and events and education services. For the specialised areas of law enforcement, cyber security, offender supervision and regulatory services, the business is positioned as a first choice service provider.

Flexible staffing services provide the ability to deliver against a variety of recruitment criteria. This includes appointing hundreds of staff to short deadlines or providing executive search services in core markets.

At the heart of RSG's training capability is a fully accredited centre delivering a national programme of BTEC qualifications to a variety of organisations. Clients include public, private and third sector bodies such as police forces, LAs and regulatory bodies. It provides services to central government departments including Home Office, Department of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence and DEFRA.

The Group's media and events businesses enable advertisers to reach the largest audience of police and justice professionals in the UK to promote goods, services and recruitment opportunities.

Operating in sensitive areas and specialising in the area of cyber security means there is a need for an exemplary approach to IT security. RSG also needs access to first-class IT service and support, enabling it to respond rapidly to the needs of its clients.

The Challenges

The parent business already used cloud-based computing infrastructure. Chris Batten, Group Operations Director, RSG says: "We were already converts to the cloud. We had enjoyed the benefits, such as flexibility for remote workers, for five years. This had initially been with a different service provider. However, as the cloud services market consolidated, it was acquired and unfortunately this had a detrimental effect on service quality."

He continues, "Quite simply, businesses are dependent on technology. HTL Support was engaged because it could provide more personalised, higher quality services on which we could rely to enable IT problems to be addressed quickly."

Red Snapper Group grew through M&A and had different systems in different places. Essentially the choice was to integrate them or move over to a new system. The parent business had a staff of 12 and the enlarged business needed the computing infrastructure to support 80 users.

"We chose to bring the new group businesses together under a single cloud platform and we went out to the market and invited proposals from the previous service provider as well as HTL Support. Although the previous provider came in below the cost of HLT Support, we had come to recognise the benefits of staying with HTL Support. It may not have been the cheapest, but we recognised the value we get from HTL Support's services,"Chris Batten says.

The Solution

There were two main parts of the project, group infrastructure and new applications.
The group infrastructure part of the project provided a private hosted desktop solution which eliminates on-premise servers. Microsoft Windows with Office 2016 desktop productivity software is hosted and supplied over internet connections to users, wherever they are geographically.

Microsoft Exchange 2016 is integrated with Mimecast to provide secure and encrypted email communications and archiving. Replication across two data centres provides redundancy, supporting disaster recovery and business continuity. All files are held on encrypted storage systems in the data centre.
The process of new application integration was required for Line of Business applications, including specialist recruitment database product RDB ProNet from First Choice Software. This enabled two legacy databases to be brought together. RSG also wished its internal IT function to retain administrative rights for the system. HTL Support facilitated knowledge transfer through appropriate levels of training to RSG's internal IT team.

Replication across a primary and backup datacentre provides an impressive business continuity capability. The Recovery Time Objective (RTO) of 20 minutes means the business can enjoy full access systems very quickly should a disaster situation arise. The Recovery Point Objective of 30 minutes also means only a very short amount of productivity would be lost.

Migration to the new system involved configuration and set up totalling hundreds of man hours. However, unlike many service providers HTL Support took the long view and provided much of this without charge. Essentially, RSG obtained a completely new IT system for zero CAPEX with one monthly fee, covering all software licences, hardware and data centre costs.

The Results

With the data centre at the hub of the hosted desktop solution all software can be maintained and supported without the need to visit a user's site. HTL Support assists users by making extensive use of remote support services. This vastly simplifies and accelerates software maintenance and upgrades as well as the support function and enables faults to be rectified extremely quickly.

Chris Batten says: "HTL Support may not be the largest IT support company, but it results in a friendly, more personal service. The same person looks after us; we get a technical specialist who knows our infrastructure rather than starting from scratch every time. Robust IT security is an important part of the solution. The sensitive nature of our core markets means there is a significant security, privacy and confidentiality dimension attached to the Group's business operations."

He continues: "IT is one of those things. It goes wrong and everyone moans about it constantly! Despite all the improvements technology brings to getting everyday tasks done, many see it as a problem. If an email takes a second longer to open than usual, then the comment is probably going to be "email is slow!"

"The reason we chose HTL Support is they are quick to respond. We get support on the phone, not through an online ticketing system. The team also provide service at weekends or at 8pm if it's appropriate to meet our needs. That's the value of Serviced Cloud," says Chris Batten.

As RSG looks to the future, growth is anticipated. "There is the potential for new acquisitions, and new services. We have five businesses in the group at the moment. The Serviced Cloud platform we now have lets us add in bespoke operations for each of those companies. Even though the five businesses do very different things, the platform is now there for shared services to provide for common functions such as finance, IT and information sharing," Chris Batten says.

Red Snapper Group key solution facts

- A market leading provider of staffing, media and events and education services for law enforcement, cyber security, offender supervision and regulatory services
- M&A enlarged user numbers from 12 to 80 and needed to bring new group businesses together under a single cloud computing infrastructure platform
- A completely new secure cloud system that required zero CAPEX with just one monthly fee to cover all software licences, hardware and data centre costs
- High value support to meet operational needs with robust and exemplary security to provide confidence for operating in sensitive markets

About HTL Support

HTL Support is a close knit and highly professional team of technology professionals that are evangelists for cloud solutions. This is because we believe the benefits are unrivalled by equivalent on-premise approaches to provisioning business technology.

The business benefits of the cloud are regularly highlighted in the press and deliberated in boardrooms. Cloud technology is a topic about which the vast majority of business leaders are likely to have more than a passing interest.

Based in the heart of London in Canary Wharf, HTL Support was incorporated in 2009 with a clear and simple vision. We are dedicated to helping business leaders in financial service organisations finds the best way of successfully adopting cloud technology in their businesses. We offer best of breed Hosted Cloud Services in our ISO27001 London data centres, and help clients to create their own Private Cloud systems in their own offices or data centres.

Our friendly and professional engineers and consultants have extensive experience, proven track records and 'can-do' attitudes. We offer independent advice but partner with the leading cloud technology companies to ensure seamless support. We are serviced focused; our client's satisfaction is paramount.