# How Creative Security Adopted a Cloud-First Strategy and Earned $1m in Extra Revenue with ZAG

"We trusted ZAG's judgment that moving our IT infrastructure online was the best solution for future-proofing ourselves, and saving time and money across the business.

And, boy, did they end up being right in spades!"

**Trevor Wall,**
Chief Operating Officer, Creative Security

# CREATIVE SECURITY
## C O M P A N Y

For more than 20 years, Creative Security has provided security solutions for organizations across California, ensuring their staff and premises stay protected.

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**HIGHLIGHTS**

**CHALLENGES**

- Running an on-premise IT infrastructure.
- Requiring significant capital outlay whenever new systems were deployed.
- Ongoing expense of monitoring and maintaining physical systems.
- Searching for a trusted partner to support switch to cloud-based computing.

# Challenges

**Frustrated by the workload, expense and hassle of managing and maintaining on-premise IT systems**

As a growing SMB specializing in guard services and security systems, Creative Security needed to ensure its IT tools and services were helping, not hindering, its core business objectives.

Like many businesses of a similar size, they'd set up their IT infrastructure within the confines of their own building. But having an on-premise IT environment created a number of challenges.

First, they had to navigate ongoing upfront capital costs whenever they needed new technology. Second, they faced the significant workload, hassle and expense of monitoring, patching, and maintaining all their physical systems.

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"Our capital outlay was significant whenever we needed to deploy new services," explains Chief Operating Officer Trevor Wall. "There were also practical challenges and cost implications around devoting space to our IT equipment, heating and cooling the spaces they occupied, and maintaining, patching, and updating so much physical equipment."

With the management and maintenance of on-premises infrastructure firmly in Creative Security's hands, Trevor was feeling the impact.

**SOLUTION**

**ZAG Technical Services** provided cloud computing and other managed services, including:

- Detailed consultation to ensure cloud adoption was advantageous.
- Implementation of  Microsoft Azure to manage applications and services online.
- Migration of email servers and systems, shared drives, and legacy applications onto the cloud.
- Ongoing support to reduce cybercrime.
- Technical consultation that enables Creative Security to land high-value contracts.

**RESULTS**

- $1m earned in additional revenue.
- $100k+ saved in upfront investment
- 100s of staff hours regained
- Seamless switch to remote working during Covid pandemic
- Maximized security and scalability

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"Whenever our servers went down, I was the one fielding calls and emails at 2 a.m. and trying to get our IT partners to come and resolve the issue as quickly as possible," says Trevor. "It was a nightmare situation and a source of constant distraction."

There was an additional burden placed on Trevor because he hadn't yet found an IT partner capable of collaborating, communicating, or consulting at the level he wanted.

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"There wasn't really any sort of consultation with the outsourcing partners we'd worked with," he says. "It was always: tell us the problem, we'll fix it. But what we wanted was someone to help us try and get ahead of the IT problems we were having.

"Communication levels were another issue. We'd either talk to an engineer who used technical language that was hard to understand, or a salesperson who only really cared about getting a deal done."

As more of the company's on-premise infrastructure reached the end of its operational life—and they faced additional capital investment to bring it up to date—Trevor needed an IT strategy change.

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"Maintaining our legacy systems required so much time, cost, and manual effort," he says. "But I knew we increasingly live in a world where that can all be handled by somebody else in a cloud-based environment, which sounded appealing."

The only problem? Trevor didn't trust his existing IT partner to deliver such a comprehensive rethink of the company's IT environment.

What he needed was a partner with deep experience of implementing cloud-first strategies. And one that could help Creative Security achieve what so many partners had failed to do—leverage the best technology solution for the business to be more efficient and productive, and scale with confidence.

> "Maintaining our legacy systems required so much time, cost, and manual effort, but I knew we increasingly live in a world where that can all be handled by somebody else in a cloud-based environment."

## Solution

**ZAG's hands-on and specialized support helps Creative Security grow their business in the cloud**

When Trevor started exploring options for migrating servers, files, and systems to the cloud, the same recommended partner kept appearing during web searches—ZAG Technical Services.

He initiated a conversation with ZAG and was impressed with their experience and approach.

> "Even after our first meeting with ZAG, I felt a thousand times more confident than I ever had with our previous companies," says Trevor.

Trevor was particularly impressed with ZAG's philosophy that technology was an integral part of doing business, that IT investments drove ROI and a competitive advantage, and that the right solution enabled businesses to grow.

> "From the first whistle, ZAG acted like a project manager and [its team members] were able to answer a bunch of our questions about cloud migration, which gave me faith in their knowledge and expertise," says Trevor. "By then, we had been burned by three IT companies, but I felt like ZAG was different and could truly deliver."

Before embarking on broadscale cloud migration, ZAG engaged in discovery and research hours to establish that cloud migration was an advantageous solution for Creative Security. These discussions happened over a period of time as ZAG provided clear reasons for adopting a cloud-first strategy.

Switching from the high capital expenditure (CAPEX) of replacing existing hardware in the building to more operational expenditure (OPEX) through month-by-month cloud subscriptions would save Creative Security money—and deliver corresponding benefits. These included increased agility and flexibility for the workforce, more robust security, and huge numbers of hours saved by eliminating the workload of maintaining on-premise IT equipment.

Once Creative Security embraced the strategy, ZAG began managing the deep organizational shift towards cloud-first adoption, using Microsoft's cloud-computing service, Azure. The project journey included:

- **Migration of email servers and systems to Office 365**—with email a critical channel for business operations, including client and supplier contact, in-house communication, and sending of invoices, ZAG shifted emails from a traditional on-site Office package to cloud-based Office365. As a result, emails were backed up automatically, security was enhanced, and staff could access email—and all other Office apps—from any place, at any time.

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- **Migration of shared drives into OneDrive**—Before ZAG, every file created and shared by Creative Security existed on a physical hard drive in their server room. By migrating all that data to OneDrive, staff could now access, share, and collaborate on files anytime, from anywhere, and across all devices. Again, security was consistently updated and files backed up, without Trevor and his team having to worry about doing any of it manually.

- **Migration of legacy business applications into the cloud**—previously all the key software Creative Security used for iits business operations, including payroll and accounting, CRM, and HR software, was locally stored within on-premise servers, and required manual intervention to ensure they were upgraded, patched, and maintained. By switching up these applications for cloud-based solutions, the team suddenly had a foundation of software that ran faster, and was more reliable and secure.

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> "ZAG helped us figure out ways to migrate and virtualize so many of the files and systems we used to manage locally," says Trevor. "While it still appeared as though everything was sitting downstairs in our office like before, it was actually deployed in a way that removed all the workload and responsibility from us."

As well as helping Creative Security maximize its IT resources by adopting cloud-based solutions, ZAG provides hands-on support fighting cybercrime, as well as ongoing user support patching, monitoring, and help desk services.

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> "ZAG emails and calls us regularly to remind us about the latest cyberthreats and trends," says Trevor. "They've trained us all, particularly the high-level execs who are most likely to be targeted, to be on alert, so we spot the dangers and don't fall prey to the ever-changing scams that are out there."

Even more valuable has been ZAG's role in providing technical consultancy. As a result, Creative Security now pitches for contracts they felt under-qualified to pitch for before because of the more technical knowledge required for success.

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> "Thanks to ZAG, we've shored up a weak link in our business, where we were short of knowledge on the latest IT solutions and didn't understand the full potential of what was out there," says Trevor.
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> "Because we can always call ZAG for advice, there's literally not a project that comes up, with clients large or small, that I don't feel we can take on."

"ZAG helped us figure out ways to migrate and virtualize so many of the files and systems we used to manage locally ... in a way that removed the workload and responsibility from us."

# Results

**$1m in additional revenue, $100k+ saved on on-premise investment, 100s of hours recouped**

Creative Security has earned approximately $1m in additional revenue by using technology as a competitive advantage since partnering with ZAG, which Trevor says would not have been achieved without them.

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> "I can think of specific projects that had technical components that were out of our realm of expertise. When we consulted with ZAG, they provided novel ideas and opportunities for what was actually possible, which enabled us to win contracts that were bigger than we had before," says Trevor.

By transitioning to cloud-based infrastructure, Creative Security has also unlocked significant cost and time savings.

They've saved $100k+ in upfront investment by eliminating the need to upgrade servers, systems, and software. Meanwhile, they've regained hundreds of hours a year by removing the workload of ongoing maintenance and oversight.

Creative Security saw even more value from ZAG's solutions when the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

> "When we first considered moving to a cloud-based environment, we trusted ZAG's judgment that it was the best solution for future-proofing ourselves, and saving time and money across the business," says Trevor. "And they turned out to be right, especially once COVID happened.
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> "With every application, file and system available instantly via the cloud, colleagues could continue to provide exceptional service to customers remotely—without an issue."

With ZAG at Trevor's side and cloud-based solutions widely adopted, system uptime is improved, time and cost savings are unlocked, and security and scalability are maximized. Best of all, Trevor has a skilled, technical team on the end of the phone that cares about making his business successful.

> "Before we worked with ZAG, we felt like we couldn't get out from under the thumb of being a small business," says Trevor. "With ZAG, we have an entire company that's dedicated themselves to making us more productive—and is heavily invested in seeing us succeed.
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> "ZAG helps us be more proactive in the work we pitch for—and makes us feel better and more confident that we can take on any job."

> "With ZAG, we have an entire company that's dedicated themselves to making us more productive—and is heavily invested in seeing us succeed."

# Let ZAG Technical Services help you decide if a cloud-first strategy is right for your business.

**Schedule a consultation now**