

Knowall Case Study

The Sunley Group

KNOWALL
PRIVATE CLOUD COMPUTING


SUNLEY

The Sunley Group of companies operates in the Real Estate markets in the UK, specialising in the following areas:

- ✓ New and refurbished homes
- ✓ Commercial property investment, trading and development
- ✓ Real estate equity and mezzanine finance
- ✓ Heritage living

The Group is family owned and headquartered in Mayfair, London with an additional office, Sunley Estates based in Guildford, Surrey. The Group's activities are throughout the UK although residential development is concentrated in the south.

Challenge

Faced with the prospect of renewing their old onsite server infrastructure, The Sunley Group approached Knowall to propose a suitable upgrade plan.

IT had grown piecemeal over the years and the company was left with an unnecessary amount of physical servers that were out of date, out of warranty and key applications like Sage 200 that were under-performing. The objective was to improve overall performance and consolidate IT infrastructure into a more simple to manage, efficient set up.

Solution

It quickly became apparent that moving to a cloud based set up would be the best approach. Apart from replacing server hardware they were looking at a significant cost for upgrading Microsoft licensing including MS Office and they wanted a system that was both reliable and flexible enough to scale quickly in line with business growth. It was important to them to have all systems running on one platform to ensure everything integrated properly and was easy to manage.

Knowall put together a Private Cloud Solution which consisted of hosting all their key systems in one dedicated virtual server environment running on Knowall's own UK based Enterprise Cloud infrastructure.

This consisted of the following services packaged together for an easy to budget fixed monthly fee:

Hosted Sage 200 – Fast access to Sage 200 from any location on any device including PC, mac, tablet.

Hosted Exchange for email – anytime anywhere access to email, calendars, contacts, tasks.

Hosted MS Office – full versions of MS Office applications (Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint) accessible from any location on any device.

Hosted file serving and data storage – reliable windows 2012 file serving and data storage, users maintain familiar windows explorer folder structure

Advanced data backups – daily data backups replicated across two separate data centres for added resilience.

Pay Off

- The main pay-off is that the business now has a lighter, faster more agile IT Infrastructure which means that Sage 200 is running at greatly improved performance.
- Having Sage 200 running in the same Private Cloud has enabled it to integrate very well with other systems and The Sunley Group has peace of mind that their data is in one place and secure.
- Overall the Private Cloud solution has unlimited capacity to support business growth and the management is a lot simpler. All of this was achieved without a large capital investment.

Guaranteed performance – as Knowall operates and manages its own cloud platform they have been able to guarantee fast performance not just for Sage 200 but all applications hosted on the environment. When there is an issue they are able to respond quickly and have full access to all layers of the cloud platform right down to the underlying physical hardware so they can be a lot more flexible in making changes than some competitors who resell other cloud platforms.

Simplified IT – The company no longer needs to think about IT in terms of hardware and software as Knowall takes care of everything at the data centre on their behalf and charges a per user service fee, not for the amount IT resources consumed. This has taken a large chunk of time away from dealing with IT issues and has enabled The Sunley Group to get on with their business of selling and developing property happy in the knowledge that their systems are always running at their optimal level.

Fast access anywhere, anytime – staff now have fast reliable access to Sage 200 from any location on any device including windows, mac, iOS and Android. This is key to running the business efficiently as staff often work remotely. Knowall's cloud platform has built in redundancy and disaster recovery ensuring Sage 200 can be accessed 100% of the time.

Smooth transition – the Private Cloud environment was set up in parallel to the old infrastructure ensuring there was no downtime and Knowall engineers were deployed onsite during and after the migration to assist users and provide training. As a result disruption was kept to a minimum.