

Overview

In business for 31 years, Victorian skilled labour hire supplier Chelgrave Contracting serves the engineering and manufacturing industry. Operating from four offices in outer Melbourne, half of its staff works remotely, visiting worksites and client offices.

The Problem

Technology and IT were restricting Chelgrave Contracting from growing the business. Paper-based processes slowed responses to clients and potential candidates and staff travelled long distances for meetings, which was inefficient and costly. Online collaboration between staff was minimal. An on-premises server was expensive to maintain.

The Solution

Equip Chelgrave's mobile workforce with smart phones and netbooks and take the company's software, data and collaboration to the cloud: Implementing Microsoft® Online Services (MOS) through Telstra's Software as a Service (SaaS) portal T-Suite® provided a remotely-hosted email, collaboration and shared diary solution.

The Benefits

Chelgrave became a more efficient, nimble, collaborative and responsive team almost overnight. Hosting data "in the cloud" has saved maintenance and capital costs and given Chelgrave the potential to expand interstate.



GOING TO THE CLOUD PART OF A RECIPE FOR EXPANSION

Sourcing skilled staff for the manufacturing industry is bread and butter for labour hire specialists Chelgrave Contracting. Finding communications technology to make them a more responsive and flexible business presented another challenge altogether.

General Manager Greg Scott had been at the helm of the Victorian-based business for only a few months when its owners agreed it was time to upgrade its information technology.

The Problem

Although Chelgrave was holding its own in a competitive industry where customer loyalty is vital, communication between its three offices and 13 fulltime staff (seven of them working on the road) was only adequate. A fourth office was about to open and the company planned to expand interstate.

An over-reliance on paper-based communication made communicating with clients and potential candidates alike a slow process.

"We weren't working effectively because we were not up to date with some of the new technology," Greg said. "Turnaround time on quotes, for example, was very slow - and if a customer has a project that needs staff tomorrow, that's an issue."



“The connectivity and online solutions that we now have mean we can establish an office anywhere – we just switch on and we have access to all our people, policies and procedures.”

Chelgrave had a handful of Next G™ modems, but no integrated smart phone capability. Remote work was via a Virtual Private Network, linking the satellite offices to head office. A partly-built intranet site was not accessible from the branches.

An ageing, on-premise server was providing messaging and data storage with only minimal calendar and contact sharing. External consultants would burn up expensive time for simple tasks like restoring services after a weekend outage.

The Solution

Greg turned to strategic IT consultants Paradyne - who recommended Chelgrave equip its mobile staff with a fleet of smart phones and notebook computers. To maximise efficient use of that hardware, they recommended the suite of software tools available from Microsoft® Online Services (MOS) through Telstra's T-Suite® cloud computing portal.

“Chelgrave have experienced almost immediate benefits,” said Paradyne's Loryan Strant. “They can now share email and data, use SharePoint to drive their intranet site, Live Meetings for conferencing and Office Communicator for instant messaging.

“Replacing its old Microsoft Exchange email solution with MOS means Chelgrave will have the latest version of software available.

“Because T-Suite allows them to buy ‘seats’ without hefty up-front license fees, Chelgrave can add new staff as they expand.”

Meetings that would have pulled people off the road while they travelled to and from head office can be conducted online. Area Supervisors needing to access

information, workplace compliance documents or file accident reports and photos can do so in a fraction of the time it took before.

The Telstra Next G™ network has extensive 3G coverage in Victoria, - an important factor when operating on the rural fringes of Melbourne. Telstra Business Broadband connects all Chelgrave offices and Area Supervisors with netbooks are linked by Telstra Mobile Broadband.

The Benefits

Greg Scott is delighted with the move to the cloud and the way his staff communicate more easily with each other, their customers and job candidates. His database integrates with the country's most popular online recruitment website.

“The ultimate measure is whether our business revenue is growing - and it is,” Greg said. “Part of that is through marketing, but having our sales and service team all remotely connected enables them to be more efficient and represents us much more professionally.

“It's only early days but we're seeing better efficiencies and lower costs. Where there was a cost before for my time to make sure that the old server worked, that's all covered by it being remotely hosted.

“We are still implementing a database and that will transform our business completely. The fact that we can all be online and use it remotely is the platform for us to now move interstate.

“The connectivity and online solutions that we now have mean we can establish an office anywhere – we just switch on and we have access to all our people, policies and procedures.”

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