

Pulsant Enterprise Cloud saves staff at law firm two weeks of time

AFG LAW is a full-service law firm providing expert legal advice to individual and commercial clients.

Challenge

Under forward-thinking new management, AFG LAW required a new IT supplier to help update its IT infrastructure to enable it to achieve its business goals. This included implementing remote working, opening a new office, and boosting security, all while remaining compliant.

Pulsant Solutions

AFG LAW worked with Pulsant to create a safe, bespoke IT architecture, including Pulsant Enterprise Cloud that would replace its problematic on-premise systems. Pulsant also helped the firm achieve Cyber Essentials accreditation.

Results

AFG LAW has created a more secure and streamlined working environment, saving staff in some areas of the business up to two weeks of their time. The firm has enabled remote working which has also improved productivity and helps to attract future staff. AFG LAW can also now demonstrate to clients and other stakeholders that it has the right processes in place to mitigate cyber risk, helping to deliver peace of mind to existing clients and secure new business.

Client:
AFG LAW

Solutions:
Pulsant Enterprise Cloud

Outcomes:

- Significant time savings
- Improved productivity
- Enhanced security



AFG Law secures expansion plans through new technology investment

With teams of solicitors and lawyers located in Bolton and Bury, AFG LAW is a full-service high street law firm that has provided expert legal advice to individual and commercial clients for over 100 years. The firm consists of six directors and 25 fee earners, as well as several legal clerks and highly trained and experienced support staff.

AFG LAW provides legal advice and claims across many different areas including property, dispute resolution, employment law, care proceedings, family law and criminal law.

The challenge: enabling growth and boosting efficiency

With a new leadership team in place, AFG LAW set itself three business goals, each of which would require an overhaul of its existing IT infrastructure. These goals included maintaining profitability, completing the Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation and expanding the business with the opening of a second premises.

AFG LAW was working with a local IT supplier and had its own servers located on-premise. However, the equipment was reaching end of life and the company needed to decide whether to move to the cloud or replace its existing on-premise infrastructure. In addition, IT security was becoming increasingly important, especially when it came to dealing with indemnity insurers, banks and the legal aid agency who sought reassurances from AFG LAW that security remains a top priority.

“We were getting many questions from stakeholders about what we were doing about IT; whether we were cloud based, where the data was hosted, and what our plans were as far as cyber security was concerned,” explained AFG LAW managing director Greg French.

Furthermore, with staff increasingly requiring system access from court, and to increase recruitment and retention, enabling remote working had also become an aspiration for the business.

“We had tried to set up remote working with our previous IT supplier and it was extremely hard work and quite expensive,” said French. “We needed an IT partner who could support us and our expansion plans.”

The solution: Pulsant Enterprise Cloud, consultancy and Cyber Essentials

AFG LAW had been in contact with Pulsant regarding other areas of business, but the conversation soon turned to the service provider's full solutions portfolio. It quickly became apparent to French that Pulsant's comprehensive range of services could support the firm in achieving its wider goals, while still remaining cost-effective.

French worked with a solutions architect to define his specific requirements and identify exactly what was needed in terms of security measures, staff training and costs.

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Greg French, AFG LAW Managing Director

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Following an initial evaluation of the IT infrastructure, Pulsant recommended AFG LAW move away from its current on-premise server to the Pulsant Enterprise Cloud solution. The environment is hosted in two Pulsant datacentres in Milton Keynes and Reading, with built-in backup capabilities, redundancy and a service wrap that includes access to a help desk that is staffed by engineers 24/7.

The migration to cloud also laid the foundation for a seamless implementation at AFG LAW's second premises. With all systems hosted in the cloud, no new IT infrastructure had to be set up at the new office, such as installing servers, enabling AFG LAW's IT team to get users operational quickly. All that was needed were new desktop computers and connectivity, which were already available within the new building.

Deploying a cloud architecture also enabled the business to fulfil its aspiration of providing remote access for staff working in court, at home, or anywhere with an internet connection at any time of day or night.

The firm has a large court department that works outside of the office. Remote working enables them to fulfil their roles outside of the office and the cloud solution ensures they have full access to the case management system which was a key requirement.

Pulsant was also instrumental in AFG LAW's Cyber Essentials accreditation to address French's security needs. Endorsed by the government, the scheme helps the business protect itself against common cyber threats and demonstrate its commitment to cyber security. The firm achieved Cyber Essentials and is now working towards Cyber Essentials Plus. After an initial audit, Pulsant is remediating gaps that were identified and will assist AFG LAW in undergoing a second audit for the accreditation.

"What we liked about working with Pulsant was the fact the team built the Cyber Essentials principles into everything they implemented. The Pulsant team has a great deal of experience in Cyber Essentials and were able to tell us from the get-go what we would need to have in place in order to go through the stages of accreditation," French explained.

From the outset, Pulsant ensured AFG LAW's staff were kept informed with a high level of communication around the project. Pulsant representatives also attended AFG LAW's annual company day to talk staff through the new architecture and the processes involved with its implementation.

"The big sell with Pulsant was the level of security that they put into the system, both the firewall and the filtering and Mimecast," said French. "The ability to work remotely helps us attract top talent, helps streamline the day-to-day jobs of existing staff and makes us a more flexible workplace."

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Pulsant subjected the bespoke IT infrastructure to rigid testing prior to deployment of the cloud solution and despatched engineers to site two weeks before the go-live date to undertake preliminary tests and make preparations to ensure a smooth launch.

For the six-week period following the successful launch of the new infrastructure, Pulsant's development team was on hand to ensure that everything was working as it should be.

The result: more efficient operations, improved security and scalability

Since achieving Cyber Essentials accreditation, AFG LAW now has the right processes in place to mitigate cyber risk, helping to deliver peace of mind to existing clients and secure new business.

Following the implementation of the private cloud solution, the firm has seen a number of benefits, including increased transparency around billing for the IT service and ease of onboarding new users. There is also greater flexibility for staff to work remotely when needed, with full, secure access to the required systems.

"There's nothing of value stored on the laptops because all information is in the cloud. If a member of staff lost their laptop or had it stolen there would be no loss of data," explained French.

The company is now able to expand or downsize its storage capacity based on its required usage at any time, with Pulsant able to respond instantly. It is also now far easier to onboard new staff members. The robust and scalable solution from Pulsant enables AFG LAW to set up new users itself, and with transparent billing, the team can see exactly how much the additional user would cost.

In addition, the time recording process for fee earners was also streamlined as a result of the migration. Previously, with its on-premise solution, time recording, memos and data backup was carried out on a month-by-month basis and could take up to two weeks for a user to pull timesheets for a specific fee earner. Now, however, enabled by Pulsant Enterprise Cloud, fee earners can enter that information themselves in real time, saving significant time and effort, and making billing quicker and more efficient.

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