Creating A Hybrid, O365 Based Environment for CALA Homes

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ABOUT CALA HOMES

The origins of CALA Homes go back to 1875 when the City of Aberdeen Land Association (CALA) was incorporated as a Land Management and Feu Collection company. For over 40 years, CALA Homes have been building premium homes and today continues to apply the same principle of exceptional design and build, meeting stringent standards and offering value for money in a wide range of sought-after locations.

CALA Homes build premium properties throughout Scotland, the Midlands and the South East of England and take great pride in not just their product, but also in the outstanding levels of service they provide to homebuyers.

MOVE TO AZURE & O365

CALA Homes were embarking on a transformation programme to extend and complement their current on-premises servers into the MS Azure cloud, to leverage MS Office365 and to seamlessly integrate this into the Modern Workplace environment. The main focus for this programme was to better support and improve the experience for remote workers.

With over 1,200 users, 2 main sites, 9 remote sites and many remote workers, this was a significant transition and CALA sought a trusted partner who could both design the end-state solution, and support both the IT team and end-users through the transition.

"NAK took the time to not just understand what we wanted to do, but what we wanted to achieve. This enabled them to provide us with a proposal that ticked all of the boxes and filled us with confidence that they could deliver what we were looking for.""

Matt Cavanagh, Group IT Director, CALA Group

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SOLUTION DESIGN

With a large number of users operating both within offices and remote, CALA needed a solution that would support their people regardless of location while also ensuring secure access to data and preserve existing mail hygiene configurations.

NAK designed and implemented a solution that extended CALA Active Directories into the MS Azure cloud to create synchronised user access. They then created a hybrid environment around O365 leveraging mail and applications in both the cloud and within on-premise environments, delivering a seamless anywhere experience for users including MS Teams for collaboration. Finally, NAK addressed mobile access through utilising Microsoft Intune and Conditional Access to provide a secure, yet more user-friendly capability.

SOLUTION ROLL-OUT

This transformation programme followed a methodical phased approach that included establishing the technical pre-requisites, platform build and configuration, test and pilot phase and then full roll-out. A key part of this was introducing the new environment to end-users and ensuring that the transition was as painless as possible.

"NAK's understanding of our existing environment and expertise in Hybrid Cloud enables them to put forward a detailed design of the solution that would take us to where we wanted to be. This was then followed by meticulous delivery that achieved our goals while minimising disruption to our business."

Matt Cavanagh, Group IT Director, CALA Group

"NAK did an amazing job of smoothly transitioning CALA and our end-users to this new environment despite the unforeseen challenges of Covid-19 restrictions faced part-way through this program – a real credit to their team."

Matt Cavanagh, Group IT Director, CALA Group

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THE OUTCOMES

What was delivered at the end of this programme was a hybrid environment that was aligned to the needs of the business and capable of delivering the desired user-experience in any location. Key benefits delivered included:
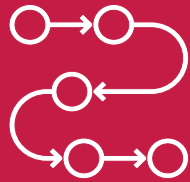
Aligned Environment

By putting in place an Identity Services Engine that controls access management across the business focused on both user and device policies.

Reduce Risk

By clearly understanding the business dependency on the network and ensuring greater resilience and DR planning across the business.

End-User Experience

By understanding every component and the topology of the network, the client is able to centrally manage and monitor the network with much improved visibility.

Smooth Transition

The meticulous approach of NAK in delivering this project during challenging times enabled a smooth transition for all stakeholders across CALA homes.

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CONTUNUED PARTNERSHIP

The success of this particular change programme has led to a strong partnership between CALA Homes and NAK. A subsequent phase is now being delivered that includes the roll-out of new laptops to the business and supporting end-users through the transition with one-to-one remote training. CALA homes are also leveraging NAK's Patching-as-a-Service to help them further protect their server infrastructure.

"NAK has become a key partner for CALA Homes and we are now working with them across multiple programmes and services. They are treated as a virtual extension of our IT team and most definitely a trusted advisor."

Matt Cavanagh, Group IT Director, CALA Group

ABOUT NAK

NAK is helping organisations to create Secure, Agile IT Environments.

Our goal is to be the trusted advisor and managed service partner for our clients, helping them to address those fundamental challenges that are critical to their business success. We do this by taking the time to understand your business, what you are looking to achieve and connecting the dots between where you are now and where you want to be.

If you would like to know more about how we can help your organisation, simply reach out on the contact details below.

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