



Singapore Auto Distributor Drives Change with Move to the Cloud

Overview

Country or Region: Singapore
Industry: Transportation

Customer Profile

Kah Motor is Singapore's exclusive distributor of Honda automobiles, and it boasts complete sales and service centers at two locations.

Business Situation

The auto dealership was filling up storage space with bulky emails, and IT staff was busy with admin tasks and maintenance. Employees were unable to work from home or on mobile devices.

Solution

Microsoft Office 365 enabled managers to access important email and large documents from anywhere, while IT staff was able to focus on finding solutions.

Benefits

- Enabled greater mobility
- Saved 35% on IT costs
- Boosted productivity

Our biggest hurdles were finding a cost-effective service that delivered on every level. Office 365 does that.

Billy Cheng, Group Head (IT), Kah Motor

In early 2011, Kah Motor began to rethink its computer infrastructure and IT strategy. The automobile dealership wanted to cut costs while finding a solution to its connectivity and storage issues, as well as refocusing IT staff on business growth and productivity.

Singapore's exclusive Honda distributor found a cost-effective solution in Microsoft Office 365. Moving critical emails and documents to the cloud enabled greater mobility for employees at the company's two large sales and service centers. Most notably, the role of IT professionals changed from focusing on admin tasks and hardware maintenance to initiating solutions and promoting growth.



Situation

With 350 employees, Kah Motor was dealing with high-volume email traffic that was quickly filling up its aging servers. Email was critical to senior management, and with the standard size of mailboxes, IT staff had to constantly monitor server space and archives to ensure no information was lost. Backups were inconsistent and time-intensive for IT staff, and archives built up quickly.

"Our IT staff spent a good portion of their time on administrative tasks and maintaining servers and hardware," says Billy Cheng, Group Head (IT) at Kah Motor. "There was no time to plan for growth."

Kah Motor evaluated upgrading its servers, but found it too cost-prohibitive. The company was using Microsoft Exchange 2003 on its servers, and while Cheng and his team looked at upgrading to Exchange 2007, that solution did not move the IT department forward enough.

The auto dealership turned to its partner, Sapientia Holdings, for advice on moving its documents and email to the cloud. "Kah Motor was at a stage where they needed to rethink its IT strategy. The company wanted to explore ways to cut costs and improve productivity. We recommended a cloud-based IT solution," explains Roger Teo, Business Director at Sapientia Holdings.

Solution

Kah Motor began a trial of Google Apps with 40 users to see how it performed. The unfamiliar interface took some time for employees to get used to, and the users experienced some security issues. The lack of integration between the Google product and on-site servers meant that IT staff had to set up and manage another set of user IDs and passwords, which taxed the busy

staff. When the group was expanded to 80, IT staff found that it was difficult to integrate new users with the cloud-based service. The partnership decided the best fit for Kah Motor was Microsoft Office 365, an online service that unites familiar Microsoft Office applications with email, calendaring, collaboration, and communication solutions.

The dealership chose Office 365 to store email and other data securely in the cloud, streamline its IT infrastructure, and keep costs low during the transition and moving forward. "Our biggest hurdles were finding a cost-effective service that delivered on every level. Office 365 does that," says Cheng.

Kah Motor employees were already using Microsoft Exchange, so the switch to Microsoft Exchange Online was seamless. With 25GB mailboxes, Exchange Online offered greater email capabilities to the busy staff. "Our employees love the bigger mailboxes with Exchange Online. There's no more digging through archives for notes and materials," remarks Cheng.

One of the biggest selling points for Kah Motor was Microsoft SharePoint Online, which enables employees to easily share graphics-heavy marketing catalogs – eliminating the need for IT staff to set up FTP sites to transfer files. "We have price lists that are distributed throughout the company, and we had versioning problems in the past. With SharePoint Online, there's a centralized place to store and access a single version of the list. There's no room for confusion," explains Cheng. IT staff also plans to roll out team workspaces and room calendars to employees as they get more familiar with the features of SharePoint Online.

Kah Motor also achieved its goal of simplifying the role of IT in the global business strategy. "Our IT staff spends less time each day on admin tasks, and four of our servers are now freed up with the move to the cloud. With Office 365, the IT department is more closely aligned with our overall business goals," says Cheng.

Benefits

With Office 365, Kah Motor has reliable storage and access to critical emails, file sharing is simple, and IT staff is able to focus on productivity and growth. The company expects to add 350 users with the rollout of a new business unit.

Staying connected

Exchange Online enables employees to keep on top of critical emails. "It's easier than ever to stay connected with Exchange Online. We can access our work email from home or on our smartphones, which means faster response times and faster decisions," says Cheng. Bigger mailboxes enable employees to send attachments up to 25 MB, a valuable feature for distributing graphics-laden documents.

Increasing productivity

Employees can easily share and access documents in a central location, and managers can control versions so no duplicate or outdated information is distributed. "SharePoint Online limits confusion for everyone. All of our documents are stored in one place, and managers tightly control access to important areas. We can send out a price list with confidence that it is correct," remarks Cheng.

Reducing IT costs

IT staff has a whole new role in the company, says Cheng. "Office 365 has created a new dimension in IT. Employees'

perception used to be that IT maintained the hardware and performed administrative tasks. Now, they see IT as initiating improvements and training that helps them perform their jobs better," says Cheng. "IT spends 70 percent of their time now interfacing with users to get improvement ideas."

Cheng also noted that Kah Motor has trimmed 35 percent of its IT budget with the move to the cloud. "We have eliminated the need to monitor and maintain on-site servers. IT staff used to spend hours each day moving data around to make space for storage, and that is no longer our concern. It's good to know that our documents are secure with Office 365, as well," says Cheng.

"Office 365 quickly moved Kah Motor from a legacy system to a frontline technology adopter without the traditional hassles and risk," says Teo of Sapientia Holdings. "They were able to get approval for a major IT solution without increasing the budget and, in fact, showing huge cost savings."

For More Information

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For more information about Sapientia Holdings products and services, visit the website at: www.sapientiaholdings.com

For more information about Kah Motor products and services, visit the website at: www.honda.com.sg

Microsoft Office 365

Microsoft Office 365 brings together cloud versions of our most trusted communications and collaboration products—Microsoft SharePoint Online, Exchange Online, and Lync Online—with the latest version of our Office desktop suite and companion web applications for businesses of all sizes.

Office 365 helps save time and money, and it frees up valued resources. Simple to use and easy to administer, it is financially backed by a service level agreement guaranteeing 99 percent reliability. Office 365 features robust security, IT-level phone support, geo-redundancy, disaster recovery, and the business-class privacy controls and standards that you expect from a world-class service provider.

For more information about Microsoft Office 365, go to: www.office365.com

Hardware

Microsoft Office 365

- Microsoft Exchange Online
- Microsoft Lync Online
- Microsoft SharePoint Online

Office Web Apps