



Marine Consultancy Charts a New Course to Global Productivity with Cloud-Based Tools

Customer: M3 Marine Group
Website: www.m3marine.com.sg
Customer Size: 30 employees
Country or Region: Singapore
Industry: Professional services
Partner: eVantage Technology
Website: www.evantage-technology.com

Customer Profile

Headquartered in Singapore, M3 Marine Group provides ship broking and a comprehensive range of offshore marine consultancy services tailored to meet the needs of the offshore marine oil and gas industry.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office 365
 - Microsoft Exchange Online
 - Microsoft Lync Online
 - Microsoft SharePoint Online
 - Microsoft Office 365 Pro Plus
 - Microsoft Office Web Apps

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“We can build a global company and stay true to our roots as a service-based business because we’re using Office 365 to support productive virtual teamwork around the world.”

Mike Meade, Chief Executive Officer, M3 Marine Group

M3 Marine Group staff did not have the access to emails and documents needed to support the global expansion envisioned by founder Mike Meade. Then he subscribed to Microsoft Office 365. Today, brokers reliably access archived emails for market trending to build better deals, and consultants collaborate better in virtual teams to expedite reports—two essential steps toward building a global business that stays true to its service-oriented roots.

As one of the busiest ports in the world, it’s not surprising that Captain Mike Meade chose Singapore as the headquarters for his company, M3 Marine Group. Meade worked as a ship’s captain before trading in his sea legs for senior management positions in the corporate world. However, his experience dealing with major oil companies and offshore marine engineering service providers is just one reason for M3 Marine’s success.

“Our brokers are veterans in the industry who use their experience to broker deals that build lasting customer relationships,”

says Meade. “On the consultancy side, we are well-known for our expertise in designing computer-controlled ship positioning systems and the relevant documentation, especially FMEAs [failure mode effects analysis].”

Defining a Vision for Growth

Today, Meade envisions M3 Marine as a global company. “I want to broaden our base, first by opening an office in Australia and then expanding to the Middle East,” he says. “We will populate those offices over time, always with a focus on

delivering best-in-class service and gaining repeat business.”

To achieve this goal, Meade needed to reevaluate the technology his staff uses every day. “I looked for productivity tools that would amplify the core competencies of the brokerage and consultancy sides of the business,” he says. “We need communication and collaboration tools that work on any device across any time zone so that we can function as productive, virtual teams. That means we need easy access to corporate data and customer information, no matter where we are in the world.”

Choosing Microsoft Office 365

Meade knew that cloud-based IT services would be the most cost-effective computing platform for his company. “We tried Google, but we didn’t like the interface and it didn’t do what we wanted; we tried a ship broker’s proprietary database and messaging service, but it didn’t perform to contract,” he recalls. “Then, in 2012, I went to a luncheon hosted by the British Chamber of Commerce Small Business Group. I met our IT provider, eVantage Technology, and I learned about Microsoft Office 365. Things at M3 Marine haven’t been the same since.”

Business Tools that Just Work

M3 Marine worked with eVantage Technology to migrate to Office 365 and the seamless transition for all 30 employees was the first indication that the new cloud-based business communication and collaboration tools lived up to Meade’s expectations. Today, all M3 Marine employees are using the same up-to-date Microsoft Office programs as part of the cloud-based suite of services.

“Each of us can deploy Office 365 ProPlus on up to five computers and devices, saving

me licensing costs,” says Meade. “And with Office Web Apps, we will be able to work with Outlook, PowerPoint, Word, and Excel programs on the go, using any browser.”

Meade begins his day by checking email on his PC at home. On his way to work, he stops for coffee and logs on to the corporate network using his laptop. Then, he’ll use a PC at the office during a meeting. Later, he’ll take his laptop to talk to a consultant about a report. “It’s that seamless transfer from one location and one device to another and knowing that I’ll always have access to up-to-date information that’s made me productive, no matter where I go,” he says.

Reliable Email, Better Customer Service

Today, brokers are negotiating better deals in chartering, ship building, and sales and purchases. They are also building better customer relationships. That’s because with Office 365, brokers gain reliable, ubiquitous access to email, contacts, and shared calendars. Now they can search archived emails to benchmark indexes so that they can provide better advice to customers about market trends.

Weekly downtime due to someone’s overflowing archived emails that blocked the network is a thing of the past. “If staff can’t work because email is down for two hours, that’s a massive cost to me; almost as much as my annual IT burden,” says Meade. “So maintaining that reliability and productivity—with Office 365 we haven’t had a moment of downtime—is key to growing my business and saving money.”

Effective Virtual Teams

M3 Marine consultants provide a range of technical and commercial consultancy in the oil and gas space along with concept

design of computer-controlled ship positioning systems called Dynamic Positioning. The team can deliver their reports quicker thanks to improved virtual teamwork using Office 365 sophisticated document versioning capabilities and cloud-based document storage. In this data-centric business, these reports are a key deliverable that M3 Marine customers rely on for FMEA of their computer-based ship dynamic positioning systems.

“Four or five consultants can contribute to a single 1,000-page marine report, including drawings, schematics, and charts,” says Meade. “Using team sites in SharePoint Online will streamline virtual teamwork and document collaboration to more quickly deliver the massive reports that they develop for our customers.”

Business Platform for Growth

With Office 365, it’s easy to simplify the process of hiring new employees. When Meade hired a new general manager for the brokerage business, all it took was a few minutes to furnish him with a laptop and an Office 365 account. Today, everyone at M3 Marine is well equipped to help Meade achieve his vision of expanding from one of Asia’s largest independent ship broking and marine consultancy houses to a global operation.

“I’m using Office 365 to build a global network that supports real-time collaboration through web conferences, instant messaging, desktop sharing, emails, and calendaring, and breaks down the barriers of time and space to boost productivity and customer service,” concludes Meade.