



Beverage Maker Boosts Productivity with Anywhere Email and Faster Communication

Overview

Country or Region: Singapore

Industry: Food and beverage

Customer Profile

Pokka is a leading food and beverage group in Singapore and Asia Pacific. The company manufactures a wide range of beverages, and also operates a variety of restaurant chains.

Business Situation

With a large percentage of its workforce on the road, Pokka needed to improve its remote email access and make it easier for colleagues to locate each other, expediting sales order processing.

Solution

As part of Office 365, Exchange Online gives users reliable email with large inboxes, so they can easily access older emails. Lync Online makes it easy for staff to have conversations virtually.

Benefits

- Mobile email access
- 25 GB email inboxes
- 1 hour saved per user, per wk.

Our sales staff is always on the go, meeting with new customers and prospects. With Office 365, now they can get to their email from nearly any mobile device.

Alvyn Lim, IT Assistant Manager, Pokka

When a company relies heavily on sales, it's critical for staff to have fast, easy access to email. It's also important for the sales team to be able to reach colleagues back at the office, so they can process orders as quickly as possible. That's why Pokka, a company known internationally for its refreshing beverages and various eateries, turned to cloud-based Microsoft Office 365.

This suite of productivity and collaboration tools gave employees remote access to emails, no matter where they were. Large inboxes mean users can see more of their email history, rather than having to archive emails on servers at the office. And it's easier than ever for employees to check each other's schedules and see who's available to chat. Demands on the IT staff have also been relieved, with automatic backups and version control. The results and feedback from users has been exceptional.



Situation

Known best for its popular green tea and carrot fruit juice drinks, the POKKA brand is synonymous with healthy beverages. In addition to carving out a solid niche in the ready-to-drink beverage market, Pokka in Singapore also owns a variety of restaurant chains that dish up everything from Japanese cuisine to Italian pasta.

With beverages sold in more than 50 countries across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, Pokka has a major international presence. About 30% of its 250 employees travel or work remotely, most of them in sales. However, many of these workers were struggling with email access while on the road, said Alwyn Lim, IT Assistant Manager for Pokka. Small inboxes prevented them from referencing all but the most recent emails, while older emails sat on a server back at the office.

Besides problems with tracking down emails, employees also found it difficult to track down each other. There was no easy, instant way to see whether a staff member was in the office, out with a prospective customer, or on vacation. Workers were at the mercy of leaving a voicemail or hoping an email would be answered soon.

Meanwhile, in the IT department, staff was doing its best to protect the data critical to the company—such as sales orders and reports—but had to work within the confines of once-monthly backups and files that were occasionally lost or deleted.

Pokka needed a solution that would provide reliable, remote access to email and make it easier for workers to collaborate virtually, while also promoting safer data and fewer demands on IT staff time. With support from Pokka Singapore Chairman Masahiro Hirata and Chief

Operating Officer Alain Ong, Pokka turned to a promising cloud-based solution.

Solution

Pokka and its IT partner, Starhub, began exploring to Microsoft Office 365, an online service which unites familiar Microsoft Office applications with email, calendaring, collaboration, and communication solutions. The IT team had considered using Google Apps, but didn't like the user interface. They also worried about using apps that weren't fully compatible with Microsoft Word, Excel, and other business programs.

In particular, Lim and his manager were eager to take advantage of the remote email access with Microsoft Exchange Online. Pokka employees, whose third-party hosting email server allowed only 10 MB per user, were always asking for more inbox storage. And once an employee downloaded an email, he or she couldn't reach it on another device. "Our sales staff is always on the go, meeting with new customers and prospects. With Office 365, now they can get to their email from nearly any mobile device," says Lim. This helps Pokka process orders in less time—and meet client expectations for quick fulfillment.

Pokka employees have found that Office 365 also helps them work more efficiently. Between the Exchange Online calendar sharing tool and the Lync Online instant chat, employees can virtually find each other when they need to. Lim says that employees love the fact that conversations over instant chat are saved in email for future reference. Exchange Online also makes it easier to manage meeting rooms. "Before, we had to manually book our meeting rooms, which sometimes led to confusion or double-bookings," Lim says.

The IT department is thrilled with the automatic data backups they get with Office 365. And once they implement SharePoint Online, the file-sharing portion of Office 365, version control will save the department from having to help users recover data when they accidentally delete files—an all-too frequent occurrence.

Benefits

Since implementing Office 365, Pokka employees have noted how much easier it is to get to emails, find and connect with colleagues, and save time.

Anywhere Access to Email

“Our staff loves that they can now access their email while they’re away from the office,” Lim says. With a large, 25 GB mailbox per user, employees aren’t forced to archive all of their old emails. This way, they can see more emails when they’re away from the office.

Improve Productivity among Employees

Lim says that employees across the company are saving about an hour each week. “Now it’s easier and faster for us to communicate with each other, using Lync Online. We can see right away whether someone is available to chat,” he says. And because employees can work together more quickly, orders are processed in less time.

Less IT Support Needed

With Office 365, Pokka’s IT department now spends less time managing data. “In the past, a user would accidentally delete a file and we’d need to rebuild the entire spreadsheet. Automatic backups with Office 365 mean we don’t have to worry about that anymore,” Lim says. His team will also spend less time maintaining hardware and software, as well as supporting on-premise servers.

Lim is looking forward to moving files to SharePoint Online, which will give Pokka’s parent company in Japan easier access to files. “By moving to SharePoint Online, we hope to create a culture where it’s easier for everyone to access the files and information they need,” says Lim.

Pokka’s IT team credits the company’s leadership for recognizing the value of Office 365 and endorsing its implementation. “By supporting our adoption of Office 365, our executive team helped us fulfill our goal to become a leading, modernized player in this competitive market,” says Lim.

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For more information about Starhub products and services, visit the website at: www.starhub.com

For more information about Pokka products and services, visit the website at: www.pokka.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.

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