

How we helped Honan Insurance scale for growth - blueAPACHE

Canonical: <https://www.blueapache.com/blog/intelligent-sme-tech-honan-insurance-scales-for-growth-with-managed-services-provider-blueapache>

Details:

Established in 1964, Honan Insurance serves clients in Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia. Its team advises on insurance, risk and financial services. The challenge Honan Insurance has increased its revenue at a CAGR of approximately 17% over the last 19 years and has insured value over AU\$280 million. As the company has grown, Honan has become increasingly dependent on its IT infrastructure. Comprising everything from critical applications and data storage to communications systems, the infrastructure supports every facet of day-to-day operations. Honan recently set out to engage with a new provider for managed services to replace an existing managed services agreement.

“Our biggest offering in today’s insurance marketplace is confidence – we strive to add more, do more and create a genuine difference for clients. It’s really important for us to have the same qualities in our suppliers,” said Honan Insurance Chief Operating Officer, Laurence Basell. “The service levels of our incumbent provider weren’t matching our expectations resulting in challenges and disruptions for the organisation. We needed a partner that understood the growth path we were on and the service levels and vision that we required. “A series of network outages brought the situation to a head. We knew it was time for a change and so we began the task of searching for a new managed service provider who could partner with us in our quest for international growth, while providing us with optimal customer engagement.”

2021

The solution The Honan IT team undertook a formal request for proposal process with a range of market-leading service providers. A shortlist was created with a small number asked to make presentations to the executive team. The plan was to find a fitting new provider and transition smoothly over time, however, while working through the RFP process Honan suffered several major outages through its incumbent network provider, accelerating the need to find an alternate solution. Honan needed a supplier with the depth of technical capability and capacity to assess, troubleshoot and fix the issues, which included a requirement for expertise around connectivity and firewalling, including its data and Wi-Fi network which was suffering regular outages. Honan shortlisted us and turned to our team for expert guidance. Our network expertise helped us resolve the technical issues and improve the support Honan needed to reduce service disruption. Our success in dealing with legacy issues and the critical value we were able to provide was so successful that Honan subsequently looked to us for advice on a whole of WAN transformation, including its international sites, all before a master service agreement was signed. At the end of the tender process, a decision was taken to sign an agreement with us for the deployment of our emPOWER portfolio of managed services due to the energy, synergy and technical competence we had recently demonstrated.

“We could see from the outset that blueAPACHE understood our business and our specific requirements,” said Basell. “They were able to showcase their value before we signed them on. They really took the time to determine where we were going as a company and what we would need to get there, and this was a compelling factor in moving our whole of business to blueAPACHE.”

Overcoming office move challenges An initial challenge came in the form of an office shift in Sydney. The company’s incumbent telecommunications service provider was unable to establish data links into the new premises in time for the planned move.

"Rather than having to delay our office move, we were able to stay on track and be operational from day one," says Basell.

Basell says we were also able to overcome some significant application latency problems that had been troubling staff for an extended period. Once this was fixed, users reported a noticeable improvement in performance. Working closely with the Honan IT team, we also undertook a migration to our emPOWER cloud platform for improved performance and stability which resulted in an immediate uplift in end user experience and confidence. In addition, the organisation is using emPOWER Managed Services, emPOWER WAN, emPOWER IaaS and DRaaS, with us also supporting Wi-Fi network and Citrix transformation. All core applications and data stores have been shifted and configured to ensure maximum performance.

"We are now based fully in the cloud," says Stuart Madden, Honan's Head of Technology and Projects. "This gives us the flexibility to increase resources as our demands grow and also ensures our systems are secure and accessible from any location."

The benefits With management of its IT infrastructure now fully in our hands, Honan is enjoying some significant benefits.

"One of the most noticeable benefits of emPOWER Cloud has been the ability we have had to continue operating during the COVID-19 disruptions," says Madden. "Prior to blueAPACHE, there was no way we could have had staff working remotely with no impact on performance and productivity."

Another benefit Basell attributes to the change is that it has been a contributing enabler to business growth: "Not only have we been able to maintain our operations, we have actually been able to grow our business during this period. blueAPACHE's ISO Certification has supported our ability to bid for more work both at home and globally as this has become a mandatory requirement for many of our prospects and customers." Basell says the company has also enjoyed a significant reduction in operating costs with the telecommunications bill alone being reduced by around 65%, as well as an uptick in productivity. Attention is now turning to growing the company's operations in New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia. Voice and data links are being upgraded and IT infrastructure improved to support growing staff numbers.

"This international expansion is being supported by blueAPACHE," says Basell. "It's important that we have a partner who can cover our activities across the region."

Basell says we have quickly become a valued business partner with our cloud, networking and staff based in Australia and he looks forward to a long and successful relationship.

"The biggest benefit for us is that we now have a partner who truly understands our business and will support our international office collaboration," he says. "They are very proactive and constantly come up with new ideas and solutions to challenges that emerge. We look forward to working with them in the future."

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What is Honan Insurance and when was it established?

Honan Insurance is a company established in 1964 that serves clients in Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia, providing advice and support in insurance, risk and financial services. It covers industries including technology, construction, mining, real estate and strata, finance and professional services.

Why did Honan Insurance decide to look for a new managed services provider?

Honan's incumbent managed services provider's service levels weren't matching the company's expectations, causing challenges and disruptions. A series of network outages brought the situation to a head, prompting Honan to search for a new managed service provider that could support its

international growth and provide optimal customer engagement.

How did you first prove its value to Honan Insurance before signing a contract?

While Honan was working through its RFP process, it suffered several major outages through its incumbent network provider. blueAPACHE, one of the shortlisted managed service providers, was brought in for expert guidance and successfully resolved the technical network and connectivity/firewalling issues, including data and Wi-Fi network outages, showcasing its value before a master service agreement was even signed.

What your services did Honan Insurance ultimately adopt?

Honan signed an agreement with us for our emPOWER portfolio of managed services, including emPOWER Managed Services, emPOWER WAN, emPOWER IaaS and DRaaS. We also supported a migration to our emPOWER cloud platform, Wi-Fi network transformation, and Citrix transformation.

How did you help Honan Insurance during an office move in Sydney?

When Honan's incumbent telecommunications provider was unable to establish data links into new premises in time for a planned office move, we stepped in so that Honan could stay on track with the move and be operational from day one, rather than having to delay it.

What benefits did Honan Insurance report after moving to your emPOWER Cloud?

Honan's Head of Technology and Projects, Stuart Madden, said the ability to continue operating during COVID-19 disruptions was one of the most noticeable benefits, noting that prior to us there was no way staff could work remotely without impacting performance and productivity. He also said being fully in the cloud gives flexibility to increase resources as demand grows and ensures systems are secure and accessible from any location.

What cost savings and productivity gains did Honan Insurance experience with you?

According to Honan's COO Laurence Basell, the company enjoyed a significant reduction in operating costs, with its telecommunications bill alone reduced by around 65%, as well as an uptick in productivity.

How has your ISO Certification benefited Honan Insurance's business?

Basell said our ISO Certification supported Honan's ability to bid for more work both at home and globally, since ISO Certification has become a mandatory requirement for many of Honan's prospects and customers.

What is Honan Insurance's next area of growth, and how are you supporting it?

Honan Insurance is now focused on growing its operations in New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia, upgrading voice and data links and improving IT infrastructure to support growing staff numbers. Basell said this international expansion is being supported by us, which is important given the need for a partner who can cover activities across the region.

