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ABOUT HONAN

Established in 1964, Honan Insurance serves clients in Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia. The company's staff provide advice and support in the areas of insurance, risk, and financial services. Industries covered include technology, construction, mining, real estate and strata, finance, and professional services.

Honan.

Honan Insurance scales for growth with blueAPACHE

THE CHALLENGE

Honan Insurance has increased its revenue at a CAGR of approximately 17 per cent over the last 19 years and today has insured value over $280m. 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," says 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.

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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, whilst 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 WiFi network which was suffering regular outages.

Honan looked to blueAPACHE, one of the shortlisted managed service providers, for their expert guidance. The company's knowledge in handling networks meant that it was well placed to resolve the technical details and provide Honan with the support so that service disruptions would no longer impact the organisation.

During this time, blueAPACHE was able to fix the network around the organisation's Palo Alto technology stack resulting in the building of significant trust between the two organisations. Indeed, blueAPACHE's success in dealing with legacy issues and the critical value which the company was able to provide was so

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successful that Honan subsequently looked to blueAPACHE 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 blueAPACHE for the deployment of its emPOWER portfolio of managed services due to the energy, synergy and technical competence which the company was recently able to demonstrate.

"We could see from the outset that blueAPACHE understood our business and our specific requirements," says 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."

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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 blueAPACHE was 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, blueAPACHE also undertook a migration to its 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 blueAPACHE 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. "
>
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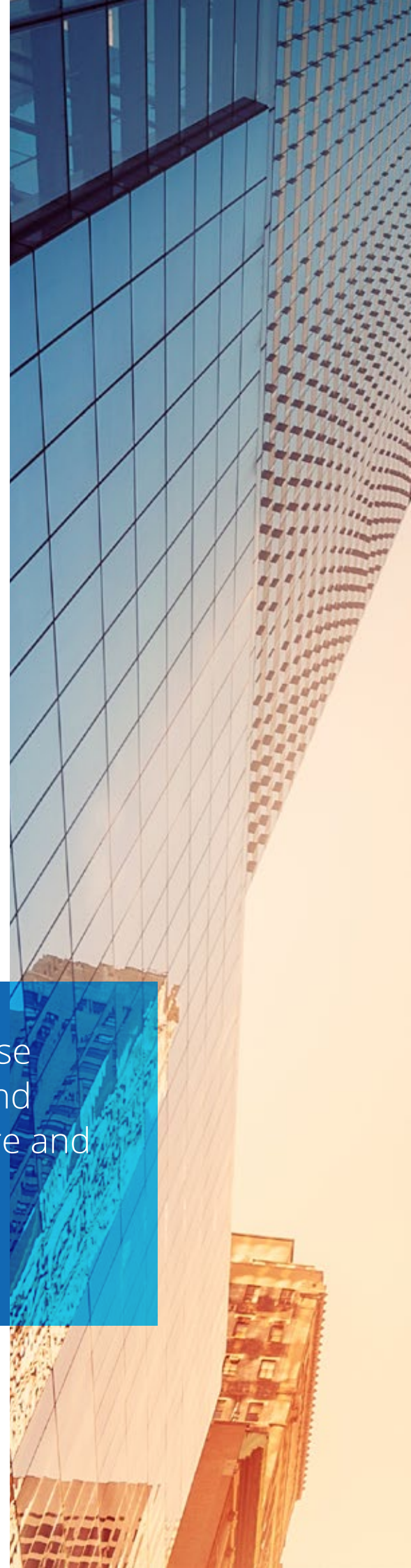
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THE BENEFITS

With management of its IT infrastructure now fully in the hands of blueAPACHE, 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 blueAPACHE has quickly become a valued business partner with its 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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