

# ACE embraces a digital workplace with Microsoft 365 Business

ACE wanted to create a successful, modern workplace fit for flexible working to attract and retain the best and the brightest talent. Microsoft 365 Business is helping them address this whilst saving the business time and improving their service for members.

## Background

The Association for Consultancy & Engineering (ACE) is a professional association and trade body representing engineers in the infrastructure and construction sectors. In 2015, they moved from a hosted desktop environment to Office 365. The business was benefitting from SharePoint, and took advantage of Cloud Direct's training and a six-days-a-month onsite engineer to support them when needed.

However, while Office 365 provided many benefits, ACE still had a fragmented IT environment of multiple operating systems and machine types, which was risking security, compliance and preventing people from collaborating successfully across the business.

## Key benefits

- ▼ Mobile, remote and flexible working for happy employees
- ▼ Communication and collaboration for improved productivity
- ▼ Simplified IT management to save time
- ▼ The latest security for data – supporting GDPR compliance

*“We all now enjoy working from our preferred machines and devices – whether we’re in the office or not.”*

Sebastian Ailioaie, Group Digital Manager, ACE

## The challenge

ACE employees both in the central office and throughout the regions need to work remotely on their devices of choice without risking business security and compliance. They also need to communicate and collaborate more easily with other ACE employees and clients.

However, their IT team was already stretched to capacity, spending a lot of time managing their complex and fragmented IT environment.

Like most small-medium businesses today, they needed to be able to do more with less.

Sebastian Ailioaie, Group Digital Manager, ACE, said: "We represent hundreds of businesses, so our staff are always on the go, advising our members across the country and organising events for them. But they need to be able to access their data, emails and files from everywhere – whether it's in their office, a client's office, or anywhere in between."

## The solution

ACE benefited from Cloud Direct's partnership with Microsoft, and signed up to Microsoft's private preview pilot of Microsoft 365 Business.

Microsoft 365 Business is a single platform and security solution designed specifically to meet the full IT requirements of today's small-medium organisations, such as ACE.

### The latest business productivity and collaboration tools

Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents can all be co-authored allowing teams to work together in different locations and collaborate in real time.

### Enterprise-grade device and application security

Mobile device management reduces the risks of remote working. A lost or stolen device, or an employee leaving, no longer represents a serious security breach. Corporate data, and access to it, is protected and can be isolated and wiped without wiping the whole device.

### Simplified device and application management

Managing Microsoft 365 couldn't be easier. Sebastian controls the environment from a 'single pane of glass' admin console. The auto-installation and update of Office apps and Windows Defender on Windows 10 reduces the usual time spent managing updates, Anti-Virus and Office installations.

And because ACE was already using the latest versions of Windows, they were able to enjoy a free upgrade to Windows 10 for all Microsoft 365 Business users.

"It's good to feel confident that with Windows 10 and Microsoft 365 we're always working with the latest, most secure technology."

Sebastian Ailioaie, Group Digital Manager, ACE

Suzanne Clitheroe, ACE's account manager, said:

"It's been great working with ACE and Microsoft to develop Microsoft 365. And even better that it's lifted some of the burden for ACE, and consultants can now be more productive and give their members an even better service."

## Results

Microsoft 365 users at ACE experienced immediate results, as they could work productively from their own devices, from wherever they happened to be. Sebastian said: "I came back from holiday to find it all working smoothly. Everyone is very happy with it."

For Sebastian, the minimal day-to-day management times means he can focus more strategically on the next steps towards the digital transformation of the business.

"We have all the security benefits I thought we could only get with servers – and it's so much easier for me to manage.

"Cloud Direct has been great at helping us transform our business and lead the way in our market by supporting us to adopt the latest technology."

Sebastian Ailioaie, Group Digital Manager, ACE

## Future plans

As part of the pilot scheme, ACE has 35 employees using Microsoft 365 and plans to deploy it across the business. It will also be taking the next steps towards a fully server-less office, by moving to Azure, Microsoft's cloud servers.



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## About ACE

Association for Consultancy and Engineering [ACE] represents the interests of professional consultancies and engineering companies, large and small, operating within the built and natural environment. ACE members are engaged at every stage with the development of social and economic infrastructure both in the UK and overseas.

As the leading business association in the sector, ACE members are at the heart of delivering, maintaining and upgrading our buildings, structures and infrastructure. They provide specialist services to a diverse range of sectors including water, transportation, housing and energy.

The ACE membership acts as the bridge between engineering consultants and the construction sector, contributing approximately £15bn to the nation's economy with the wider construction market contributing a further £90bn.

[www.acenet.co.uk](http://www.acenet.co.uk)

## About Cloud Direct

Cloud Direct helps ambitious organisations adopt Microsoft cloud. Our clients know that the right technology can free them to grow – offering increased security, productivity and agility. But they also know caution. So our job is to make their cloud journey safe and affordable.

Since 2003, Cloud Direct has helped 4,000 organisations move their IT to the cloud. We are a direct gold Microsoft cloud services provider (CSP) partner. We hold ISO 27001:2013 (for security) and ISO 20000 (for service). At 75% our Net Promoter Score is world-class, and we provide 24/7 support to ensure continual service delivery.

## Contact Cloud Direct

To find out more about how we can help your business, contact us on:

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