Ardent moves its IT infrastructure to Azure cloud – case study

In May 2015, Ardent needed a partner to go smoothly through the merger process in which it was created. The company also needed an ongoing 24/7 support for its current activities and the ability to support its new digital business initiatives to further reduce its IT-related costs and improve its business operations. After a thorough examination of the offers submitted in the tender procedure, Ardent decided to cooperate with EUVIC. The company has provided Ardent with 24/7 IT help desk services, consisting of three line-support teams, as well as helped Ardent in the process of migrating its IT services to the Microsoft Cloud.

About Ardent

Ardent is an industry leader in wreck removal and emergency response. The company was set up as a result of the merger of Svitzer Salvage and Titan Salvage in May 2015 to offer a more comprehensive solution to the maritime industry. That goal has been achieved by diversifying the company's services from traditional salvage to a full range of emergency management services, project related works, offshore decommissioning and underwater services. Ardent is headquartered in Houston, Texas, with operational offices in the Netherlands, Australia, Brazil, Greece, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, United Kingdom. The company employs 140 staff.

Initial situation

Svitzer Salvage and Titan Salvage, whose merger led to the foundation of Ardent, previously used an outsourced IT help desk service. Therefore, Ardent – aware of the benefits of IT support services provided by a specialized external vendor – also decided to apply this business model. The company needed a partner who would implement the local server infrastructure and networks (routers, switches, access points) in its main offices throughout the world as well as manage servers and services in the Microsoft Azure cloud. In addition, the partner was expected to provide Ardent with the first, second and third line of IT support services. The company invited a few pre-selected vendors, including EUVIC, to submit their offers for IT help desk services.

Challenge

Ardent required a stable partner who would provide a very wide range of IT services (including help desk) but also future support for its digital business initiatives. The prospective partner was also expected to have proven experience in providing IT help desk services for global companies, with branches spread all over the world. At the beginning of the cooperation, one of the main challenges was the migration of mailboxes and file resources (documents, CAD files) from the two companies to a new one and a reconnection of all inherited computers to the new Ardent domain, while maintaining business continuity. Also, the company's IT services were planned to be moved to the Microsoft Cloud (Azure Cloud and Office365).

Solution

After a thorough examination of the offers submitted in the tender procedure, Ardent decided to cooperate with EUVIC.

"We chose EUVIC because of its extensive expertise in the field of technologies we wanted to use, and in particular in Microsoft solutions. It was also important for us that the company had a lot of experience in the provisioning of IT help desk services, good credentials from its existing customers and presented the best offer in the tender," said Peter Pietka, CEO at Ardent.

The scope of the IT support offered by EUVIC includes the following technologies and solutions:

- Microsoft Office 365 (Email, Contacts, Calendars, Tasks, OneDrive)
- Microsoft Azure (Virtual Servers)
- Microsoft System Center (Operations Manager, Configuration Manager, Virtual Machine Manager, Endpoint Protection and others)
- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft SharePoint
- Microsoft Yammer
- The infrastructure of servers, network devices and other computer equipment (printers, scanners) in the offices
- Staff's personal computers and mobile devices
- A single point of contact for all of Ardent's IT systems, including MS Dynamics NAV, ThinkingPhones, TruPhone, ChromeCRM, Oracle Hyperion, JetReports, Adobe, and for Internet service providers in each of the offices.

In the SLA signed by the companies EUVIC guaranteed 24/7 IT support to Ardent. The service is provided to all of the company's offices, including USA, the Netherlands, Singapore, Korea, South Africa, Australia, Brazil, United Kingdom as well as to staff performing tasks outside the office (including Egypt, Greece and Germany).

Team and organization of work

EUVIC has assigned 20+ consultants and engineers to work for Ardent. They are grouped in the following teams:

- The first line support team – available 24/7. All its members speak fluent English and are trained to solve common problems related to local computers, mobile devices, printers, connecting to the network, Office 365 and SharePoint. Ardent's staff may contact Customer Support via phone, email, IM and a web portal. In the Help Desk system, available through a web portal, users can access a list of their requests with the full history of performed actions. In the case of status change or new information, the system automatically sends email notifications.
- The second line support team – also available 24/7. It performs complex administrative tasks and resolves more serious issues handed by the first line of support.
- The third line support team – performs tasks related to the implementation of new technologies as well as deals with the current development of the internal SharePoint portal and the publicly accessible website.

The development of cooperation

"In the course of cooperation Ardent decided to migrate and maintain its public website on the Azure WebSites cloud platform. Currently, we are expanding internal SharePoint applications for different departments of the company. There are also plans to implement new technologies, such as DirectAccess and Microsoft Intune, to enable the management of mobile devices, mobile applications and desktops from the cloud," said Marcin Wojtaszek, Infrastructure Director at EUVIC, coordinating the cooperation on EUVIC's side.

Benefits

Reducing the cost of IT help desk services significantly

Thanks to its cooperation with EUVIC, Ardent can take advantage of 24/7 IT help desk services at a price significantly lower than in its native US, while maintaining the same high level of quality. These savings result primarily from lower labor costs in Poland (by about 50 percent than in the US).

Immediate IT support in the process of the company formation

Ardent ensured the immediate IT support at a crucial time of the merger between Svitzer Salvage and Titan Salvage. EUVIC, based on its experience, not only efficiently migrated mailbox accounts and documents from both companies to the new one and reconnected computers between domains, but also quickly designed and configured the IT infrastructure, including local servers and networks, as required by Ardent.

Supporting the process of migration to the cloud and new digital business initiatives

EUVIC also provided support for Ardent in the process of migrating its IT services to the Microsoft Cloud. This enabled Ardent to reduce its costs in that area (by approx. 30 percent, incl. reduced capital investment, setup costs, labor cost, power cost, resilience without redundancy). In addition, thanks to EUVIC's very broad range of competencies, the company is able to quickly and flexibly support Ardent's new ideas aimed at generating further IT savings and improving performance throughout the organization.

<u>One IT competency center – easy management and troubleshooting</u>

EUVIC, responsible for many IT help desk-related projects for all of Ardent's branches, has become a single common IT competency center for the whole company worldwide. This makes it easier and faster to solve possible IT problems for all branches, freeing salaried staff from many arduous duties. This way of cooperation also makes it easier to manage it and control its cost-effectiveness.

<u>Credentials</u>

"We needed a stable partner who would provide us with immediate and cost-effective IT help desk services worldwide. At the same time, we wanted our new partner to be able to support our new digital business initiatives with its broad competencies, in particular in the area of Microsoft technologies, and its ability for fast and flexible action. We have found such a partner in EUVIC" – Peter Pietka, CEO at Ardent.