Midcoast 4WD Centre
CASE STUDY

Established in 1992, Midcoast 4WD Centre pride themselves on delivering a one-stop shop experience for their passionate customer base. From servicing needs, registration inspections and suspension installation to 4WD accessories, canopies, and outback travel advice, Midcoast 4WD Centre work to provide the best possible service available.

And that includes leveraging up-to-date technology. So, when their on-site infrastructure started to reach its end-of-life, Administration Manager Sarah Cass went looking for a solution.

Incumbent IT environment beginning to falter

Midcoast 4WD Centre had been working with an aging server environment that was supporting the storage of sensitive customer information as well as front of house POS systems. Due to the legacy nature of the architecture, Midcoast 4WD Centre were beginning to experience performance issues as well as the very real risk of a security incident owing to a limited number of critical security patches being applied.

In addition to this, their networking environment presented a number of public access security issues on top of several critical devices on the network using default username and password credentials. Storage was also at capacity with the overall environment configuration further exacerbating several performance issues being experienced.

With a high risk of systems failure very much on the cards if they were to continue operating in their current state, Area9 was invited by Midcoast 4WD Centre to develop an appropriate solution to address the increasingly unreliable environment.

Area9 is engaged to revamp IT environment

Following a detailed presales design process an appropriate technical solution was presented, Midcoast 4WD elected to work with Area9, highlighting their confidence in Area9 being able to ensure the project deadlines and business outcomes would be met.

What did the solution encompass?

A detailed project deployment plan addressing several critical elements within Midcooast's IT environment, which included:

- **New Server Hardware (Rack Mounted)** –Tier 1 server hardware containing multiple SAS drives for performance, multiple power supplies, and network cards for redundancy.

- **New NAS Hardware** – A rack mounted NAS for data archiving and local backups.

- **Upgrade to Server 2019** – New domain controller/file/print server as well as a terminal server was built on a 2019 platform.

- **Migration of Emails to Office 365** – All emails were migrated to Office 365.

- **Upgrade Office 2010 to Office 2019** – All office instances were upgraded to Office 2019.

- **Implementation of Veeam Backups with Cloud Connect** – Midcoast team was configured with local backups to both the NAS as well as user external hard drives. Additionally, copies of business-critical data also being replicated to the Area9 data centre.

- **Replacement of Wyse terminals with HP Thin Clients** – Embedded with Windows 10, this superior hardware enabled the utilisation of hardware acceleration for internal service sessions.

A smooth delivery process

After the culmination of the defined technical list, a project initiation document outlining the deliverables and respective timeframes was sent to Midcoast 4WD Centre. Post-approval, a

project kick-off meeting was held with all relevant stakeholders to ensure Midcoast's requirements were clearly understood and the project could be delivered in a timely manner.

Area9 then commenced the rollout and implementation process, coordinating all the purchasing, financing, configuration and installation of all the new equipment. Additionally, Area9 worked closely with several third-party vendors to ensure the line of business applications were migrated smoothly to ensure no data loss and minimal downtime during transition to the new environment.

A process Administration Manager Sarah Cass says went beyond what she was expecting.

"Area9 exceeded our expectations in terms of both delivery and customer service. We couldn't have asked for more accommodating people to handle our demands."

An influx of new business benefits

Since the rollout was completed, Midcoast 4WD Centre has seen the emergence of several new and key business benefits.

- Reduced Maintenance Overheads – Thanks to automated patching, a stable operating environment, and significantly increased security, Midcoast is seeing a reduction in the costs needed to maintain their IT environment. The HP Thin Clients across the business ensure a stable and consistent operating environment, while Office 365 subscriptions ensure they always get the latest updates as they arrive.

- Significantly Less Downtime – Since the new environment was implemented Midcoast 4WD Centre has not experienced any unplanned outages due to their IT infrastructure.

"We're really happy with the transition of our systems and how seamless the whole process was. I really appreciate the patience shown to us in regards to ongoing niggling issues and user experience changes. Especially Area9's willingness to show me how to best work with the system while also allowing me to do things previous providers wouldn't. That trust element is massive for us."

Midcoast 4WD Centre Administration Manager Sarah Cass

- Controlled Operational Expenditure – Midcoast can now reliably predict their IT operational expenses and budget accordingly. For example, Office 365 and Veeam licensing along with warranty can be budgeted for in advance.

Overall Increased Productivity – Thanks to a responsive and reliable environment, Midcoast are no longer experiencing unscheduled reboots or system freezes. Productivity has increased across the business with staff no longer having to sit idle waiting for their critical systems to come back online.

Initially a little concerned at the potential for a 'major catastrophe' to occur with so many critical systems to update or migrate, Administration Manager Sarah Cass couldn't be happier with the overall outcome.

Sarah also noted that considering how significant the project was and the benefits Midcoast is already reaping, she couldn't be happier.

"The whole Area9 team made it seem almost effortless transitioning from the old environment to our new systems which are just fantastic. The whole team and I here at Midcoast can't say thanks enough for their patience and dedication."

Midcoast 4WD Centre Administration Manager Sarah Cass

Area9 Enterprise

Deriving value from your information assets is the key to true digital transformation and business improvement. Talk to Area9 today to understand how to unleash the real potential of your prior and future technology investments.

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