

PLENARY GOES TO THE CLOUD

Service Desk and Cloud solution brings advances

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“I’m a CFO – not a techie – and to make decisions I need information in a form I understand. Moving away from techspeak has helped clarify my business needs. Harbour IT has done it really well”

Kym Warner - CFO

Plenary Group is a independent long-term investor, developer and operator of public infrastructure. They are one of the worlds leading international infrastructure companies with a large, experienced management teams located in the Americas and the Asia Pacific region. They take a hands on approach – embracing finance, planning, design and construction, complementary commercial development, and asset management and operations.

- Public-Private Partnerships (PPP or P3) infrastructure experts
- Projects valued at more than \$10.5 billion
- Established track record in Asia Pacific and the Americas
- Local teams and expertise drawing on global perspectives
- Hands-on management, from project design through to long-term operation
- Innovative and sustainable solutions for public infrastructure
- Secure, value-for-money, bankable results.

Their reputation is built on having delivered diverse and challenging privately financed public infrastructure projects. The Plenary team prides itself on innovation, finding new ways to overcome traditional obstacles.

Technology history

The Plenary Group have been partnering with Harbour IT for 8 years with Harbour looking after all of the groups IT needs during that time. Several small upgrades have been undertaken as well as a Co-Location agreement that saw Plenary’s servers placed within the HarbourIT data centre and connected back to the various Plenary offices utilizing a Riverbed optimised wide area network.

Although there were no serious problems being experienced, the IT infrastructure was nearing the end of its useful life and some issues were starting to emerge.

- Most of the technology was close to or out of warranty.
- Performance levels were not up to the standard that was needed moving forward.
- Space limitations for storage.
- No real opportunity to “grow” the current infrastructure.
- A desire for cost mitigation.
- Maintenance costs were rising
- Management and keeping on top of licensing
- A desire for greater security and redundancy.

Anticipated growth phase needs an adaptable solution

Looking ahead, Plenary Group could see that they were about to enter a strong growth phase and the need for a robust IT infrastructure that could grow with the business was obvious. After consulting with the Harbour IT team, it was decided that there was two major design specifications that would give the outcomes that were needed.

“Harbour IT were very forthcoming about what they could do and very upfront about the investment. They know what they are talking about”

*Rick Zecevic
- IT Manager*

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“The technology is brilliant”

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“A Capex spend expectation of \$1million dollars – No way will that happen”

Morné Swanepoel -
Chief Financial Officer

1. A traditional IT infrastructure build with an upgraded WAN.

2. A fully hosted cloud solution.

The traditional approach was costed and specified. Accurately predicting the business needs and therefore the IT needs proved difficult. Cost was also a strong factor.

The decision was made to opt for a Cloud based solution however Plenary also wanted to ensure that they obtained the best market competitive pricing that was available. A rigorous Tender process followed under very tight scrutiny from both CFO Morné Swanepoel and the Board of Plenary Group. After a period of post tender negotiations, Harbour IT was chosen to provide a fully hosted, managed and monitored Cloud Solution. The reasons for this were;

- Cost competitive.
- Robust Cloud Infrastructure and services.
- Strong intercompany relationships.
- Past performance.
- Access to some of the best technical and support people in the market.

Cloud Solution implemented

In the Christmas break of 2010 the transition to the Cloud began. During the migration phase as with most IT project there were some hiccups and problems experienced. Staff members from both Plenary and Harbour worked closely to solve these problems to ensure that the project was delivered as per specification.

Once the transition was completed, the true strengths of the Cloud solution emerged.

Benefits of a Cloud Solution

The following is a list of benefits and outcomes that Plenary have enjoyed since the Cloud implementation.

- Access to the highest levels of Security, Redundancy and Disaster Recovery
- Move from Capex to Opex via a variable monthly subscription model that assists cash flow planning.
- Significantly reduced calls to Help Desk
- No licensing issues.
- Scalability of system to mirror the business needs.
- A significantly better remote user experience. (the VPN upgrade caters for normal PC logons but also for Apple or Android Smart Phones and tablets)
- Failsafe transmission of very large documents.
- Greatly increased email capacity.
- Overall reliability

“The technology is brilliant, it just works very well. As a CFO, I don’t want IT to be an issue. Since our move to the Cloud, IT has gone off my radar.”

Morné Swanepoel -
Chief Financial Officer