



Customer Case Study – IT Services

MCG migrates clients to Microsoft 365 amid a global pandemic

Customers seek to accelerate transitions to the cloud as the new demands of a distributed workforce place high value on email services and robust communication and collaboration tools.

Our customer

Since 1984, Microcomputer Consulting Group, Inc. (MCG) has provided IT outsourcing services to over 100 clients who don't have dedicated internal IT resources or would like to supplement their existing IT team, applying technology to solve business problems in a cost-effective, streamlined and intelligent way.

How we helped

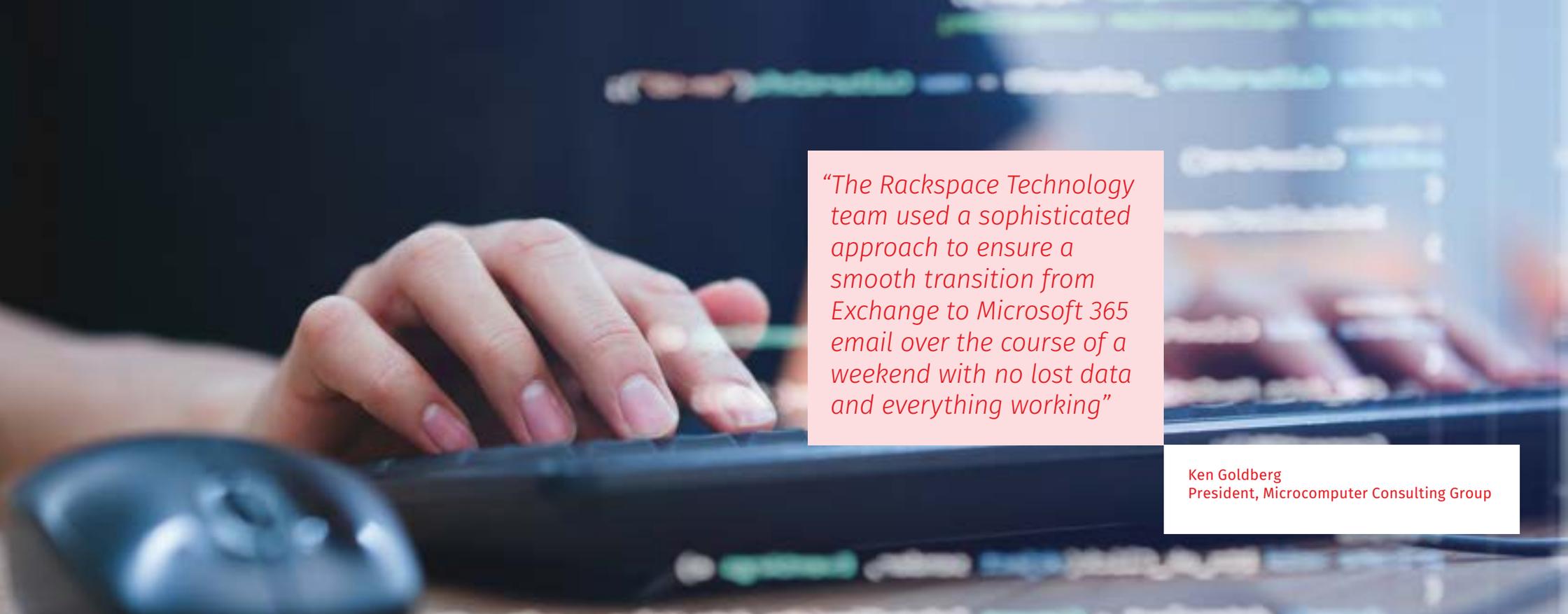
Microsoft 365; Microsoft 365 migration; Rackspace Email; Hosted Exchange; Email Reseller.

The obstacles they faced

MCG's clients were being besieged by a rapidly expanding onslaught of email phishing and ransomware attacks, and spam. Simple fixes to its existing email service did not improve security. The firm needed help to transition to a more secure email service.

What we achieved together

MCG's clients gained a seamless email transition with no downtime. Now they enjoy sophisticated email security and spam-free inboxes. What's more, Microsoft 365 gives them access to robust collaboration and communication tools that greatly improve the new work-from-home culture. Plus, MCG has gained new windows of business opportunity.



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Ken Goldberg
President, Microcomputer Consulting Group

Pandemic accelerates MCG’s switch to Microsoft 365

Microcomputer Consulting Group, Inc. (MCG) is no stranger to disasters and the impact they can have on IT operations. When Superstorm Sandy hit the east coast in 2012, impacting businesses and residents in New York and New Jersey, the event prompted the IT services firm to rethink its on-premises data center model and disaster recovery plan. In particular, the event inspired the company to move its operation to a managed cloud and move its email services to Microsoft® Exchange Email.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a similar business-changing event for the company and its nearly 100 clients, who are largely located in the New York metropolitan area and surrounding region. After deciding to make a change from Hosted Exchange to Microsoft 365 to improve email security, the company faced resistance from the majority of its customers.

However, after the pandemic struck, many customers were ready to make the change. Now, a growing number embraced a move to Microsoft 365 to gain both the added security, as well as access to the host of collaboration and communication services Microsoft 365 offers.

Hosted Exchange had worked well for years. In 2019, one of MCG’s clients with over 750 email addresses became the victim of ongoing spearfishing, spamming and ransomware attacks, resulting in significant technical challenges. Several fixes to the system, including changes to the routing rules, failed to slow the velocity of the attacks. That’s when the company decided to upgrade to gain Microsoft 365’s robust email security features.

Strengthening email security with Microsoft 365

“We take a layered approach to security. But one significant layer was not optimized and, as a result, was impacting our defenses — and that was email,” said MCG President Ken Goldberg. “We were starting to see an increase in email attacks. In fact, the majority of our clients had at least one, if not more, episodes where their credentials were stolen. This security problem was a major business driver for us to look at switching to Microsoft 365.”

Along with the cyberattacks, many clients were also disgruntled with the amount of

spam they were receiving. With overburdened email boxes they tended to let their guard down and not pay close enough attention to the source of the emails. This also led to more spam breaches.

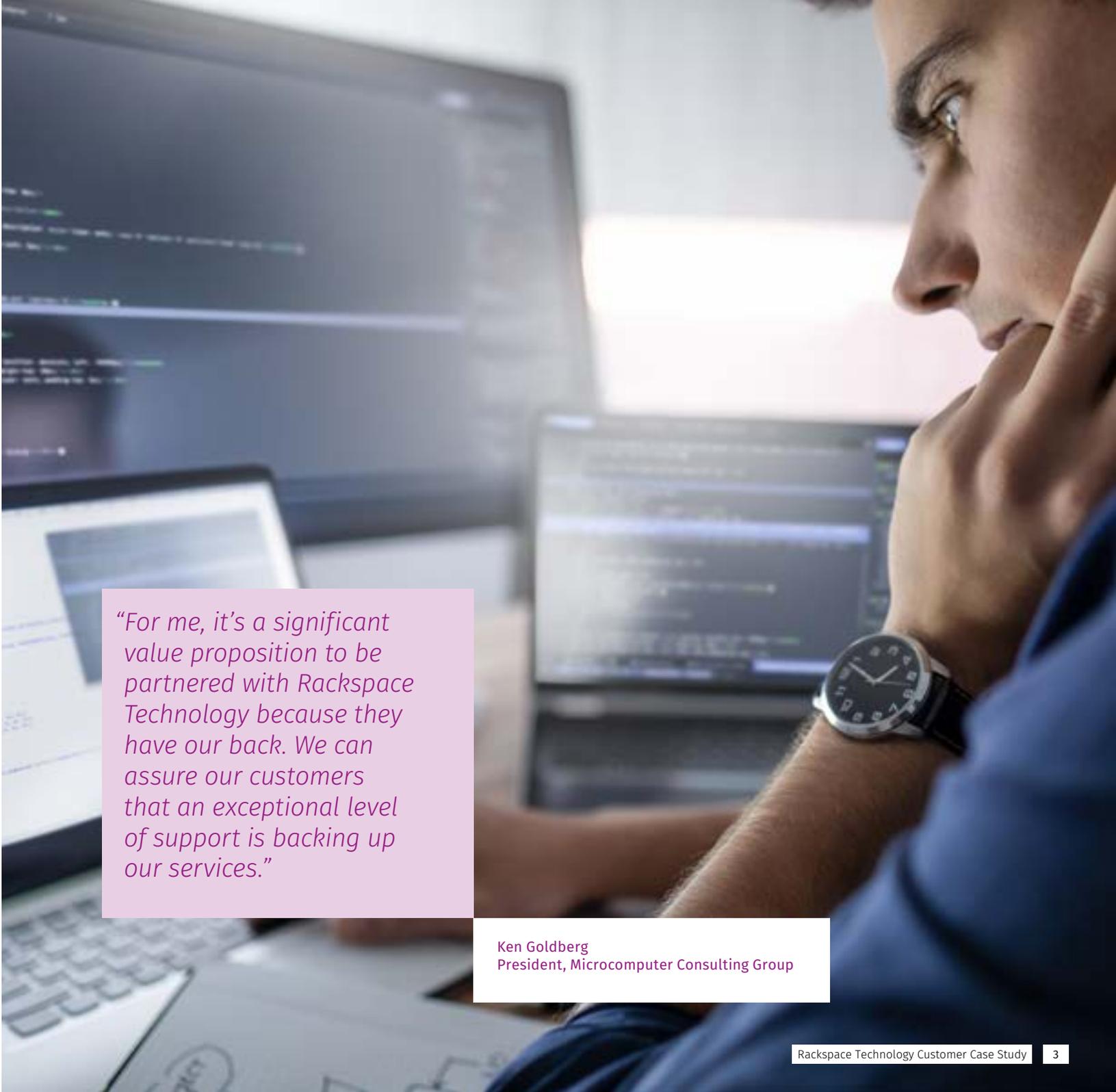
As MCG continued to deploy Microsoft 365, it was able to take advantage of the full range of features for its customers. This included diving into the full range of security features now available to its customers, including protections that prevent emails to be sent from outside domains to a distribution list. “If spammers access 400 email addresses, the odds increase that their email attacks will be successful,” noted Goldberg.

Making the transition to Microsoft 365

Once Microsoft 365 solved the biggest problems for its clients in 2019, MCG began the process of migrating its entire client base to Microsoft 365. Due to some initial customer resistance, it was decided that the migration would be orchestrated in three stages.

MCG chose a phase-one customer group based on priority. “I created a spreadsheet of all of our clients and their email challenges,” Goldberg said. “The customers with the worst email issues were part of the first big wave of migration. They didn’t have a choice. But they were happy with the results, because they immediately experienced a big reduction in attacks as well as spam. However, we still had other clients unwilling to make the switch. Most were nervous about the potential for lost or misplaced data and downtime.”

Goldberg continued, “One client, who was very worried about the potential for loss, was pleasantly surprised on Monday morning when he returned to the office. Everything was where it was supposed to be. His business didn’t miss a beat.”



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Rackspace Technology has MCG's back — again

MCG has a long history of working with Rackspace Technology™. This relationship formed back in 2012 when the lights were out during Superstorm Sandy. MCG desperately needed access to email, and Rackspace Technology got the company and its clients up and running overnight. From that experience, MCG saw the value of working with an outsourced IT partner.

When it came time to make the switch to Microsoft 365, MCG felt confident that Rackspace Technology would come through again. “We attempted it by ourselves, but quickly realized that was a bad decision,” said Goldberg. “We worked out a deal with Rackspace Technology to create a partnership that allowed us to efficiently manage migrations together.

“For me, it's a significant value proposition to be partnered with Rackspace Technology because they have our back,” Goldberg continued. “We can assure our customers that an exceptional level of support is backing up our services.”

Gaining the full force of the Fanatical Experience promise

In particular, the Rackspace Technology team used a sophisticated approach to ensure a smooth transition from Hosted Exchange to Microsoft 365 email over the course of a weekend with no lost data and everything working. “Our clients seamlessly moved from one email environment to another,” said Goldberg. “That's a huge deal based on the massive amount of data involved.

“Also, the collaborative effort between our team and theirs was stellar,” Goldberg

added. “They worked with us to come up with solutions that allowed us to get done what we needed to get done. Anything that was an issue was always resolved to our satisfaction. So it really was a pleasure to work with everyone throughout the entire process. They really lived up to their Fanatical Experience™ promise.

“I can feel comfortable knowing that I've priced the new email platform right, that migrations will get done in the timeframe promised and that, in the end, our clients are going to get what they want when they want it, which is a seamless transition with no downtime, email security and a spam-free inbox.”

Leveraging the full MS Microsoft 365 services bundle

The next wave of clients to be transitioned to Microsoft 365 was given a year's notice. However, something happened that accelerated that journey — COVID-19.

In the wake of the onset of the pandemic, suddenly clients who had not yet transitioned came to MCG were asking — even begging — to migrate to Microsoft 365. “Now it was no longer just about email,” said Goldberg. “Many of our clients, 90% of whom were now working remotely, wanted the benefit of the other services in the Microsoft 365 package, like SharePoint, OneDrive and Teams. Interest in the migration absolutely exploded after the first lockdown in New York. Those services became so much more important. Our clients were telling us ‘we need it now! I don't care if I have to pay more.’

“The first seven months of the pandemic just completely changed everything,” Goldberg said. “People don't think of Microsoft 365 as just email anymore. They think of it as a

robust platform with flexible collaboration and communication services. And that's where we pretty much are today. Our clients want the services, security and peace of mind. The ease-of-use offered in the home environment has been enormous.”

The transition to Microsoft 365 opens new windows of opportunity

Not only has MCG gained a vast improvement in email security, but also new opportunities, such as licensing other Microsoft products. “This transition has opened up opportunities for new discussions and sales opportunities with our clients,” noted Goldberg.

“For example, it's opened up the door to voice over IP. People now realize they don't have to have a handset at their desks to talk to people. That certainly is an evolutionary step for a lot of folks.

“It's even changing the way that we sell our business proposition, because our clients now understand the value of flexible collaboration and communication tools,” Goldberg added. “Most of our clients do not envision ever returning to a strictly office-based environment the way that it was before. They're asking themselves questions like, ‘why do I need a server?’ and ‘why do I need a New York office?’

Summing up the new reality we face, Goldberg said, “Giving our clients access to tools they can use anywhere resulted in a huge advantage. The deployment of Microsoft 365 email has opened everyone's eyes to the future of work.”

About Rackspace Technology

Rackspace Technology is the multicloud solutions expert. We combine our expertise with the world's leading technologies — across applications, data and security — to deliver end-to-end solutions. We have a proven record of advising customers based on their business challenges, designing solutions that scale, building and managing those solutions, and optimizing returns into the future.

As a global, multicloud technology services pioneer, we deliver innovative capabilities of the cloud to help customers build new revenue streams, increase efficiency and create incredible experiences. Named a best place to work, year after year according to Fortune, Forbes, and Glassdoor, we attract and develop world-class talent to deliver the best expertise to our customers. Everything we do is wrapped in our obsession with our customers' success — our Fanatical Experience™ — so they can work faster, smarter and stay ahead of what's next.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com or call **1-800-961-2888**.

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