

PINNACLE GROUP

Rackspace expands Pinnacle into a private cloud environment and consolidates its infrastructure estate.

BUSINESS

Pinnacle Group transforms communities by creating better places to live through regenerating its social and physical fabric.

CHALLENGES

Pinnacle had outgrown its cloud environment and needed to prepare for the impending General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulations.

SOLUTION

Compliance, Hybrid Cloud, Security, Virtualization, Scalability

PRODUCTS

Rackspace Private Cloud powered by VMware®

OUTCOME

The new solution allowed Pinnacle to better respond to increased demand and business growth.



Pinnacle Group

Pinnacle Group transforms communities by creating better places to live through regenerating its social and physical fabric. The organisation's key operations are delivered by five main brands: Pinnacle Regen, Pinnacle Places, Pinnacle PSG, Pinnacle Power and Pinnacle People. Through its operational businesses, Pinnacle Group provides capital investment, housing management, private rented sector services, facilities management, improved energy infrastructure and employment assistance.

The group delivers services to over 320,000 homes, schools and public spaces and has helped over 40,000 people find employment. Pinnacle employs around 2,300 people with a turnover of more than £90m in the last year.

Gaining flexibility, security and agility

Rackspace began working with the housing and regeneration specialist Pinnacle Group in 2015, providing the organisation with Rackspace's fully scalable, secure dedicated private cloud. Underpinning 80 percent of its core applications, Pinnacle Group's private cloud delivered flexibility via its fluid, software-defined performance layers.

By outsourcing its IT requirements to Rackspace, Pinnacle Group gained the flexibility, security and agility to continue to grow without needing to worry about its IT infrastructure. The business could then focus on upcoming projects and deliver increased value to its service users.

By 2017, various changes to Pinnacle's business requirements meant that the organisation was looking to revise its cloud strategy. Pinnacle had become aware of its physical data needs; the organisation had experienced enormous growth in terms of data volumes and wanted to expand and develop its on-premise storage to facilitate this growth. Pinnacle was looking for a sustainable solution that would augment its application system capability. As part of this transition, Pinnacle sought to consolidate its infrastructure estate, which was largely unintegrated at the time.

This more integrated framework would allow the company to offer better propositions to its customers and facilitate business growth.

The expansion in cloud capacity was particularly important to accommodate Pinnacle's communications needs. In the social housing space, the organisation often handles calls on behalf of customers. However, the way that its customers were communicating had evolved in recent years, and Pinnacle needed its infrastructure to evolve in step. The company needed to have the right number of channels available to deal with the IT requirements related to this – not just telephone, but web chat and SMS capabilities, too. In other words, Pinnacle not only wanted to expand, but also wanted to create a mature platform through which it could take on new opportunities and add wider value to the business.

Pinnacle was also acutely aware of the impending implementation of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The company holds a great deal of personal information, and it was important to correctly handle that information and to establish processes to ensure regulatory compliance.

Perhaps most importantly, in 2017 Pinnacle underwent a management buyout supported by Starwood Capital. Segregation of Pinnacle's IT environment was critical; a new IT environment accommodating both Pinnacle and its former parent needed to be implemented.

Pinnacle looked to its partner, Rackspace, to manage and deliver on all of these fronts at a competitive price.

The Rackspace redesign

As Pinnacle underwent these organisational changes, a new cloud environment needed to be created. Previously, Pinnacle and its parent ran on a shared private platform, but the separation of the two companies meant the separation of IT environments was paramount.

For the outgoing former owner, Rackspace produced an entirely new and separate environment. Highly resource-intensive and motivated by the potential for scalability, the business decided on

a multi-tenant, scalable environment which would allow it to cope with increased demand and business growth. Pinnacle, meanwhile, expanded into the original environment that was vacated in this process.

Tony Brown, Head of IT at Pinnacle, explained: "Rackspace offered us the commercial flexibility to adapt in a way that we wanted. With our partnership, we were able to shortcut the whole process. Pinnacle is now more agile. No longer needing to worry about the state of our IT infrastructure, the company has the capacity to focus on adding value to the business."

"Rackspace's expertise has been invaluable," Brown added. "Its managed service has levelled out the peaks and troughs to give us the flexibility and agility to act quickly on business needs and focus on customer service. Without Rackspace's support, the timescale and cost for this move would have been much greater."

Focusing on the future

Rackspace is centralising Pinnacle's IT environment and transitioning its applications onto the cloud. Upon completion, Pinnacle's applications will be fully consolidated, and the organisation's on-premises environment will be limited to network equipment.

With Rackspace as its trusted partner, Pinnacle is overcoming the challenges of GDPR. "Under Rackspace's guidance, we are putting a GDPR-focused data management strategy in place," Brown said. "The company's IT systems are controlled and we are implementing the processes to manage data appropriately and securely. We are looking forward to working with Rackspace in the future. The Rackspace team is always responsive and communicative. When we need advice or help, they are more than willing to do that."

ABOUT RACKSPACE

Rackspace is the #1 provider of IT as a service, in today's multi-cloud world. We deliver certified expertise and integrated managed services across public and private clouds, managed hosting and enterprise applications. Because Rackspace partners with the leading technology providers, including Alibaba®, AWS, Google, Microsoft®, OpenStack®, Oracle®, SAP® and VMware®, we are uniquely positioned to provide unbiased advice on the technologies that will best serve each customer's specific needs. Rackspace was named a leader in the 2017 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Public Cloud Infrastructure Managed Service Providers, Worldwide and has been honored by Fortune, Glassdoor and others as one of the best places to work. Based in San Antonio, Texas, Rackspace serves more than 150,000 business customers, including a majority of the Fortune 100, from data centers on five continents.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com or call us at **0208 734 2600**.

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