

Cloud and COVID-19 are permanently changing our courts

Technology today is advancing at such a rate that it is often difficult to keep up with what's new, which is why it's important to understand what your business is trying to achieve.

In this regard, it is important that the CIO understands what relevant technology is available and what digital transformation is required to help the business achieve its objectives.

Shane Morrow, MD of PSI Services, says that what sets the business apart is that it effectively operates as the CIO for most of its clients. He explains that the company has a 20-year heritage of providing high-end corporate technology solutions to the majority of the Bar Association advocates of South Africa, in 17 different chambers across the country.

"These solutions include redundant fibre links, managed security firewalls and endpoint protection, managed wired and wireless networks, various cloud-based solutions and most importantly, a friendly face to call for help when the technology does not work as expected," he says.

"We make use of the Office365 and Azure platforms as a focal point, and as a Silver Microsoft Partner we leverage off the many other services they offer. The removal of high-risk, on-premise hardware has seen a massive increase in demand for Azure services, as the speed, flexibility and virtual nature thereof offers enormous advantages over physical equipment."

Morrow suggests that when he bought PSI in 2016, the majority of advocates were simply 'plodding along' with what they had, which was basically LAN-based software, small pop3 mailboxes and ADSL Internet. However, the introduction of cloud backup, hosted servers and O365 revolutionised how they work and was so significant that in just four years, cloud has gone from contributing absolutely nothing to PSI's turnover, to amounting to some one fifth of the company's total earnings.

Asked about the importance of partners, he says that he has known the business and people of Axiz since his earliest days in IT, adding that they too have been along their own path of digital transformation.

"Today, Axiz provides us with 90% of our cloud solutions, and the tools they provide to procure and support their services is what makes them a preferred partner. Axiz makes it incredibly easy for me to sit in front of our clients and make the promises I do. I believe



Shane Morrow
MD, PSI Services

that a partnership is one in which both parties are winners, which is certainly the case with PSI and Axiz."

"The current COVID-19 crisis has certainly been a game-changer, having thrust cloud-based technology onto all industries, whether they liked it or not. This has been a big shock to the legal profession, which has always remained very hands-on in terms of court appearances, as well as being very paper intensive, and has rarely used technology effectively."

Morrow suggests that 2020 has therefore seen a massive shift in the use of cloud-based technology in the legal sector. The introduction of CaseLines only emphasises this.

"PSI has been inundated with requests to upgrade the advocates' O365 licenses, as well as their technology – in the form of iPads and laptops – to enable access to the cloud. We have provided training on Microsoft Teams and demonstrated how to collaborate on documents through OneDrive.

"PSI has even set up the very first e-court in the centre of Johannesburg, and has designed a number of witness arbitration rooms for advocates across the country. In fact, I believe that the courts will be forever changed owing to COVID-19," he concludes. ■

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