

Flexibility and security for Walsh Group

A nationwide mobility solution for a coast-to-coast construction company



Summary

Client profile

The Walsh Group is a general building construction company founded 1898 in Chicago. The firm is still a family business, and have a nationwide portfolio of projects, often on the scale of \$1 billion or more. Walsh constructs a wide variety of building, civil and transportation projects including highways and bridges, offices, warehouses, educational, sports and correctional facilities, often as part of joint ventures formed specifically to build large scale projects.

Problem

With 20 main offices and approximately 175 job site locations at any one time, Walsh's workforce is mobile and dynamic. They experience large seasonal changes in numbers with the addition of tradesmen, partners, sub-contractors and interns as projects come and go. Walsh needed a way to give their workers dependable and secure access to company systems while on site.

Solution

OCG created a unified hybrid solution using Microsoft Forefront Identity Manager, Enterprise Mobility Suite (Azure Active Directory Premium, Windows Intune) and Office 365.

Benefits

- Single-sign on means fewer helpdesk calls and more satisfied users with fast access to what they need
- Easy collaborations – Support for Microsoft Sharepoint collaboration sites
- Secure file sharing – Encryption of files both in transit and at the destination device
- Flexible working on any device – Primarily iOS, but also Android and Windows devices are all used by their partners, sub-contractors, etc.
- Speedy, automated provisioning and de-provisioning – to accommodate a dynamic workforce and the launch and completion of their projects
- Reduced IT costs
- Increased data security

The problem

The Walsh Group is a general contracting business headquartered in Chicago. They have 20 main offices and approximately 175 job site locations at any one time.

Walsh's workforce is highly mobile with large seasonal changes in company size, with about 2,700 information workers but with an additional 7,000 tradesmen, partners, sub-contractors and interns depending on the season.

All these workers need efficient and secure access to share critical business documents that allow them to co-ordinate and collaborate, and Walsh needed a way to give their workers the secure and managed access they needed to systems and documents while in the field.

The solution

Oxford Computer Group (OCG) had worked with Walsh before, helping them integrate their Microsoft Forefront Identity Management (FIM) system to manage their Active Directory and Exchange email system, using data derived from HR systems. This was important as new requirements arose for providing electronic services to a growing population of non-employees.

After the FIM work was completed, an OCG technical consultant, went to meet Walsh Group's Patrick Wirtz who wanted to talk through the options for enabling their workforce to work more flexibly.

OCG introduced Microsoft's Enterprise Mobility Suite (EMS), a comprehensive set of Microsoft technologies including FIM, Azure Active Directory Premium (AADP), Intune and Azure Rights Management (RMS) designed to work seamlessly together. Patrick immediately saw its potential: "The entire package has been really important to us. The ability to pull all this different information together is vital. It helps our staff be more productive and Walsh to be more competitive."

Patrick had been looking at a competitor solution for device management, Okta, but, he says: "the amount of functionality you get with EMS versus the single function solution of Okta is night and day." It does not provide service comparable to Azure RMS, and the device management solution is rudimentary compared with Intune. Walsh chose EMS.

Walsh had 1,500 company-owned iOS devices and about 3,000 employee-owned devices which resulted in significant helpdesk workload for assistance with adding and maintaining email

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accounts and enrolling devices. Users shared documents and data via email. OCG embarked on a planning and implementation strategy with Walsh, beginning with AADP and Intune. OCG configured 2,700 seats of Intune in the cloud giving internal employees access to Office 365 data and documents through their iOS devices used at the work sites. Now, with Intune, Patrick estimates that Walsh is making cost savings equivalent to one to two full-time helpdesk employees a year, as each user previously spent about a half hour on the phone with the helpdesk for each device.

Walsh is also finding time and cost savings with the Cloud App Discovery tool and MyApps, both features of Azure AD. They use the Cloud App Discovery tool to guide their users to the right applications (such as OneDrive for Business), and use the reporting tools to recognize new app trends within their organization.

MyApps simplifies the user experience for all of the apps being used by Walsh employees with a single password, single portal integrated with Office 365, and easier provisioning for IT through a single mechanism. It increases security through easy disabling of user accounts. Self-service password reset removes the need for helpdesk to provide this function, as users can now reset passwords themselves.

With Azure RMS, Walsh can now securely sharing rates and prices with the estimators they work with for every building project.

Looking ahead

Walsh is still working on exploiting the full business value of the EMS package by researching and testing features they have not yet deployed. They are looking into Azure RMS to increase security and data protection across all company documents, and they're currently evaluating and piloting multi-factor authentication (MFA) and plan to roll it out to employees in 2015. With their dynamic project schedule and the aggressive use of project based partners they're interested in the B2B solutions available with EMS, the Cloud App Discovery feature within AADP, as well as Privileged Identity Management and Privileged Access Management through the new Microsoft Identity Manager feature of EMS.

"OCG continues to work diligently to make sure that Walsh is able



to exploit the full business value of EMS through increased worker productivity, quicker and more secure deployment of company data needed on a per project basis and decreased IT costs." says Steve Brugger, OCG President. "And with Microsoft's aggressive evolution of the EMS suite with more capabilities, we expect to provide that value."

About Oxford Computer Group (OCG)

In the IT world change is a given. Moving to the cloud, enabling devices, rolling out applications – whatever you are doing – you must ensure that the right people access the right corporate data from the devices and locations you choose. That's where we come in; helping you to stay in control with identity management, device management and information protection

OCG's solutions help organisations to be more flexible and responsive. We will guide you through the complexity.

We are recognised as the global experts in identity and enterprise mobility, winning yet again the prestigious Microsoft Partner of the Year award in 2013, 2014 and 2015.