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Business Plan

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43 ways your business will benefit from outsourcing your IT support to Certum

How do I know if Certum will be any better than our current outsourced IT partner?

The outsourced IT industry is well established now, as such you get a very similar message from the majority of managed IT service providers (MSP). The main areas are usually:

- **Access to experts with specialist skills**

- **Pro-Active IT support**

- **Cost cutting**

- **IT strategy and Virtual CIO**

There is plenty of rhetoric on the value of these services however the quality of delivery from providers vary wildly with horror stories of false claims, overpromising and underdelivering.

We like to break these core areas down further to explain how Certum achieve our promise of helping deliver your business goals through the right utilisation and support of technology.

We believe there are 6 main areas that split into 43 benefits for your business. On the next page you will see an illustrative breakdown of the main areas where we can help followed by a breakdown of each benefit and how they help your business.

Now your business may not need all 43 benefits but that is where we come in, to help you decide which areas are most important to you and to deliver a quality managed IT service that will help your business be more stable, productive and cost efficient.

43 Benefits

Maintaining Business as Usual

- Connectivity
- Third party vendor liaison
- IT Asset Management
- Backup and Disaster Recovery
- Helpdesk
- Field Support
- Monitoring and Alerting
- Dashboard Reporting

Security

- Automated Patching
- Multi Factor Authentication
- Security Awareness Training
- Encryption
- Conditional Access
- Anti-Spam/Phishing
- Anti-Virus/Ransomware
- Data Loss Prevention
- DNS filtering

Financial

- No employed IT staff
- Reduced CAPEX costs
- No major downtime
- Lower service charges
- Predictable monthly spend
- Faster resolution to user issues

IT Skills Gap

- Project Management
- Cloud Management
- Infrastructure Management
- Root Cause Analysis
- Migration Services
- Documentation
- Vendor Expertise and certifications

Strategic guidance

- Future proofing
- Procurement
- Technology lifecycle management
- Innovation
- Industry specific digital transformation
- New Technology

Productivity and Collaboration

- Data Analytics
- Mobile Worker Management
- VoIP
- File Sharing
- Collaboration Tools
- Uptime and Resilience
- Flexibility

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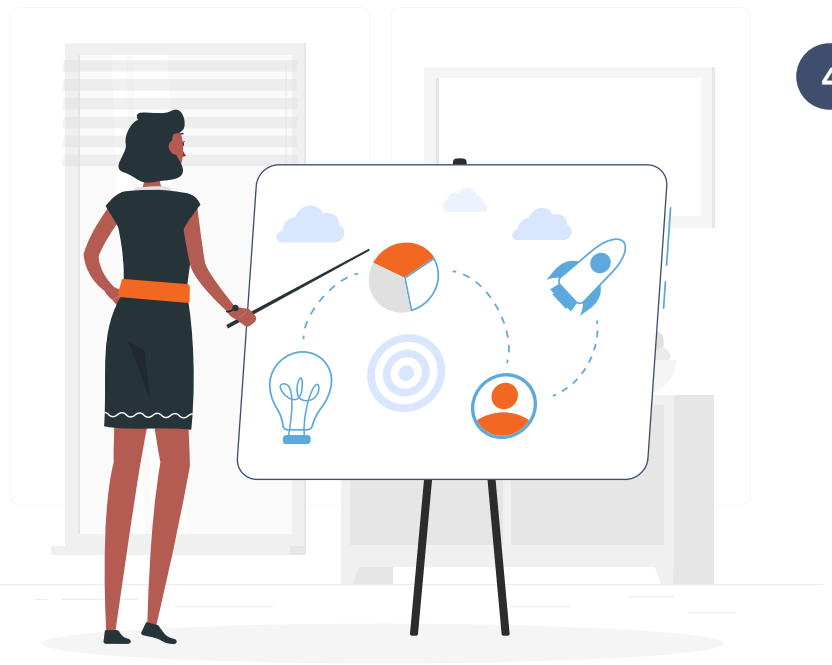
Maintaining business as usual

These days IT facilitates most functions of a business, if the IT infrastructure is down then the business loses a large part of it's ability to carry out its activities. This can be company wide in the event servers or connectivity go down or on a lesser scale if one or a small number of users lose access to devices or services they require to do their jobs.

Therefore maintaining business as usual is the main reason an organisation would outsource their IT operations to a managed service provider such as Certum. Outsourcing means they have 365 day cover, something which a sole IT internal resource cannot provide due to holidays, sick days maternity/paternity leave etc.

Connectivity

We ensure you have constant connectivity. With the advent of Software as a Service and Microsoft 365 more and more services are online, we ensure you have reliable, always on access at a budget and speed that suits your business.

Third Party Vendor Liaison

Some of your issues will be caused by hardware and software not under the support of your IT partner, support is usually provided direct by the vendor. This could result in users being passed back and forth between your IT partner and the vendor resulting in downtime and ruining productivity.

By using Certum as your IT partner we take control of the situation and engage with the vendors on your behalf until the issue is resolved.

As an MSP that supports numerous industry types we have vast experience in dealing with industry specific software and hardware and can at times resolve the situation without even passing it to the vendors with their steep SLA response times.

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IT Asset Management

Do you know what IT equipment you own, who uses it, how old it is, whether it is still in warranty. We cover this for you and provide detailed reports ensuring you don't run the risk of old equipment causing you downtime.

Backup and Disaster Recovery

In this age of ransomware and business email compromise a reliable 2 tier backup strategy is a must have. Often, however, MSPs fail to monitor these backups effectively or outsource to other providers and fail to take into consideration accurate "recovery point objectives" and "recovery time objectives". We make sure you get full value from the investment you make into ensuring your business is quickly recoverable in all restoration and disaster recovery scenarios.

Helpdesk and Field Support

Our helpdesk is arguably our strongest benefit to an organisation. You are assigned a small helpdesk team that understand your industry and is assigned to only a small subset of our clients ensuring they get to know you quickly and vice versa building up a strong rapport and understanding of how your business works and any repeating or ongoing issues you may experience so they are quickly dealt with.

The real value from a helpdesk comes in its response and resolution times, we invest heavily in training and ensuring we have the right number of technicians on your team so that our first response, first contact resolution and resolution time metrics are second to none.

Inevitably not all calls can be resolved remotely via the helpdesk. We have a dedicated field support team ready for any escalations that come from the helpdesk ensuring that when an onsite presence is needed it is quickly assigned and resolved.

Monitoring and Alerting

Every MSP claims to use remote monitoring and management tools (RMM) to alert on issues on your network however in our experience this is where most over promising comes in with other MSPs. They tend to use it more as a remote login tool to carry out support calls than have any meaningful alerting and monitoring policies in place. At Certum we can demonstrate exactly what we monitor for and all tickets generated by our RMM platform are clearly noted in the helpdesk. Concise monitoring and alerting policies can often alert you about critical issues coming down the line and therefor we put the resources into making sure we are on top of it.

Dashboard reporting

One of our big differentiators is our ability to provide your business with its own bespoke dashboard showing any information you wish to pull from our systems relating to our service. The dashboards use APIs to plug into all our relevant systems, helpdesk, RMM, Anti-Virus etc and we can create gauges that show real time information on number of tickets, average response times, average resolution times, patching levels of PCs and servers just to name a few. We are completely transparent in our service.

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Security

We list security next as it is basically a subset of "maintaining busines as usual" but is so complex and critical to a business that it needs its own section.

Never in our history as an MSP have we seen more victims of cybercrime than we are seeing now. Very few of which are the result of a genuine "network hack". Overcoming network defences is far too time consuming and the easier way into your network is through the inexperience of employees in being able to spot when they are being targeted. Phishing attempts and password theft are now the most common back doors into your business.

Services we provide and manage greatly reduce the ability for cyber criminals to infiltrate your network, as outlined by Microsoft if you put the following 3 services in place and maintain and monitor them properly you will eliminate over 99% of cyber-attacks.

- **Multi Factor Authentication**

- **Conditional Access**

- **Data Loss Prevention**

Other ways we help are:

Automated Patching

Zero day vulnerabilities is what causes mass ransomware attacks. Wannacry is probably the best known due to the havoc it caused around the world and with our own NHS. By Automating your device patching you greatly reduce your vulnerability to attack. We provide automated patching by default as part of our support service.

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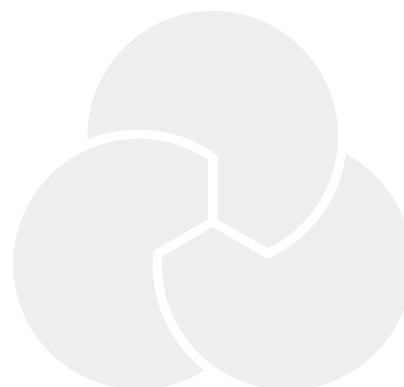
Anti-Spam, Anti-Virus and DNS filtering

We centrally rollout and manage your security services ensuring you have the most comprehensive cover against malicious code and sites with easy reporting on what is trying to enter your network.

Encryption

Do you work with sensitive data, PPI or have remote workers. Most people have Microsoft 365 already these days and we use this to manage the encryption of all devices with centrally stored keys for recovery.

Security Awareness Training

By educating your employees on how vulnerable the company is to them clicking on links in convincing but fake emails, or to weak passwords, we will deliver not only technological defence, but also a more vigilant workforce. This training can be automated and reported on so you can see who is most likely to click on fake links and put the company at risk.

By far the most effective thing you can do is enable Multi Factor Authentication, MFA is rarely offered as standard due to the management cost and skills gap but we include this within your standard support package as long as you have Microsoft 365 in place.

Financial

The most cited reason for moving to a managed IT service is cost savings and the most popular argument is that by using an MSP you remove the need to hire an internal IT person. An in house IT employee or team will most likely have a narrow view and limited exposure to the breadth of technologies and solutions that are available and the problems that may arise from them, they will also be expensive to retain on the books.

By leveraging the capabilities of a leading outsourced Managed IT Support provider like Certum you gain access to a highly experienced and qualified technical support team covering multiple technologies and solutions. You get instant access to a comprehensive knowledge base gained through supporting and consulting on a diverse range of clients across multiple verticals at usually a good fraction of the cost it would be to maintain an in-house person or team. You cannot beat the value for money that outsourcing to Certum would provide.

Reduced Capex costs, lower service charges and a predictable monthly spend

At Certum we ensure everything is bundled into one monthly cost for your support giving you a predictable monthly spend, in contrast we hear of MSPs that charge for service requests such as installing PCs and setting up new equipment or onboarding new employees which means your costs can fluctuate unexpectedly.

As we manage all your subscriptions and equipment you will have a lower cost for service charges as we deal with everything for you. You do not need to assign anyone internal to deal with management of services. As Gold partners to the major hardware and software vendors such as Microsoft and DELL it means we can provide equipment at a reduced cost to sourcing by yourself or through other MSPs without our accreditations thereby saving on your yearly CAPEX.

No major downtime with constant monitoring and fast resolution to issues

Lost productivity is a major concern for all business owners, large or small. Financial targets can slip when there is major or even minor amounts of downtime for staff, by outsourcing to Certum we constantly monitor your equipment and have Microsoft Certified professionals ready to look at any issues that are coming up or that happen unexpectedly and with our unmatched response and resolution times you are guaranteed to be back up as quick as possible.

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IT Skills Gap

As mentioned in the financial section it is incredibly hard to get a single IT person or small team to have the breadth of skills and experience a fully trained, constantly evolving MSP service desk can provide. This is not only an issue with internal teams, many MSPs do not invest in industry training for their technicians and therefor they fall behind in their knowledge and abilities. Certum are a 4 competency Microsoft Gold Partner, a very elite distinction in the UK and especially in Scotland. We are also Gold DELL partners, another difficult accreditation to attain and maintain. We understand the value of vendor expertise and certifications.

As the saying goes, you don't know what you don't know, and this can be dangerous for you if you are using an MSP that cannot prove their credentials and levels of expertise.

Project, Cloud and Infrastructure Management

These are the 3 main skill sets that unfortunately most businesses we engage with have found lacking to some degree with their previous managed service provider. Working with Certum will show the importance of a partner that can demonstrate their breadth of skills and experience across all these areas.

Good IT project management will ensure all aspects are thought of, even those less obvious requirements that are usually missed. We document all our procedures and ensure all stake holders are involved in the planning and sign off on all projects.

The cloud is constantly evolving, as Gold Microsoft Partners we get weekly and monthly briefings on what is changing in the 365 and Azure platforms. Cloud migrations is the number one project type we get asked for just now and as such we have racked up a lot of experience in the field. Most people think once their cloud migration is complete it just runs but this is not the case your cloud infrastructure needs monitored and maintained.

If you are running in house servers you no doubt will have had issues with users getting access to data they shouldn't, data restores not working as backups were not configured properly or had stopped running days or weeks previous without your MSP being aware of this, hard drives failing unexpectedly.

By partnering with Certum we ensure all monitoring and alerting policies you require are put in place and that all processes are documented and followed by your Certum helpdesk team. As everything is documented and monitored, we can be confident of being able to run root cause analysis on any issues you experience and stop them re-occurring.

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Strategic Guidance

When you hire an MSP they should be able to support your current infrastructure. Which is great if you do not plan to grow or compete with a changing marketplace where your competitors are utilising technology to provide a better service or product to your potential customers.

The whole purpose of partnering with Certum is to allow us to align existing and emerging technologies with your business goals. This means that yes, we will support your IT infrastructure as it is but we will constantly advise you through our scheduled meetings on what new technologies are out there that could be useful to you.

Future proofing with new technology and innovation

We try and future proof your business by making sure IT decisions made today do not adversely affect you in the years that follow. Innovation in new technology can mean the world of difference if implemented before your competitors.   It has been explicitly proven that organisations who embrace technology and digital transformation are more successful. There is a gap in productivity which directly correlates with a companies' digital investment; digital fluency should be a key component of your business strategy.

Industry specific digital transformation

As we support multiple clients in most industries, we have exposure to what technologies are emerging and which are the industry standards. We attend industry specific events that relate to our customers to ensure we are as up to date as we can be.

When you share with us your goals and future plans for the business it may mean you need to introduce new software, or extract more value from existing data, introduce new ways of remote working or change your processes and establish best practices. We are always on hand to advise as part of your IT support service.

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Productivity and Collaboration

Many managed service providers use the claim of being able to help your business become more productive as a selling tool, however other than keeping your systems running so you can work and be productive what else have they brought to the table. In most cases, nothing. If you are using a less experienced less qualified IT partner then a simplistic IT service is all you will get, they will keep your systems running and that is all there is to it.

Now uptime and resilience is definitely important and something we emphasise strongly and advise our clients on how to achieve, be it going fully or hybrid cloud or implementing high availability solutions such as hyper converged infrastructure.

There is more to being productive than just keeping the lights on, however.

Productivity and collaboration go hand in hand, most workers do not work in individual silos, they need to interact and collaborate with their colleagues and the easier and quicker you make this for them the more productive they are.

Claiming to increase productivity without a business case to do so is pointless, we use our strategic guidance meetings to understand which tools will make you more productive.

Do you have remote workers? If you do then you will need mobile worker management to ensure they have access to all the tools they need. This is where VoIP makes sense and implementing the right collaboration tools to allow file sharing and virtual meetings. In todays world being flexible and agile will give you an advantage over your competition, there are technologies and processes out there that when implemented with purpose will help you achieve this.

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Data Analytics

"If you can't measure it, you can't improve it."

When you think about this quote, it should immediately become apparent how true it is. Because, if you can't measure something, and know the results, you can't possibly get better at it

Using data to evaluate what is working and what isn't is a very valuable management practice. And it is still a practice that is used far too little. Do you interrogate the data you create? Be it in a CRM system, line of business application, numerous spreadsheets.

There are now numerous solutions you could implement to help:

- **Proactively anticipate needs**

- **Mitigate risk and fraud**

- **Deliver repeatable results**

- **Optimise and improve your service, product or customer experience**

We help our customers understand when data analytics would be valuable and what solutions to use to achieve the results they require.

In Summary...

Well done for making it to the end and there you have it there are truly 43 reasons to partner with Certum as your MSP. If any of these benefits stand out as something you do not currently receive from your current MSP then get in touch by emailing info@ certum.co.uk or visiting our site www.certum.co.uk and filling out the contact form.

On the following pages you will see some of our customer success stories and a little background on Certum.

CASE STUDY

NEWTON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

About the client

Newton Property Management started out in 2001 with one ambition, to shake up the property management business. When you choose Newton as your property manager, you choose the Newton Way – a modern approach to factoring that puts people first and profit second.

Their company ethos and customer retention has enabled Newton to grow into one of Scotland's largest property factors with over 23,000 properties under management. Headquartered in Glasgow but with offices throughout the country Newton manage properties from Ullapool to Gretna.

Name: Newton Property

Sector: Property

Client since: 2005

Services provided by Certum:

IT Services

Cloud Services

Telecom Services

The Challenge

Due to the pace of growth Newton have experienced over the last 5 years combined with legacy application requirements they had grown into a mixed bag of physical and virtual servers. Therefore, management, warranty and end of life issues across components, products and software was beginning to become a major issue.

Individual downtime and dependencies, scalability and management issues with multiple consoles and complexity of infrastructure turned out to be a hurdle in their smooth operations. With the business continuing to grow at the same pace Newton knew they had to bring down the total cost of ownership, opex costs linked to space, electrical power consumption as well as air-conditioning cooling requirements needed for all the physical servers. There were also additional costs linked to periodic maintenance, downtime and DR recovery testing.

The Solution

Certum advised moving from a traditional infrastructure to a hyper converged infrastructure (HCI). HCI takes compute, storage and virtualisation into a single management solution. The HCI platform replaces silos of servers, storage, virtualisation and a host of management tools and processes. As a Microsoft Gold partner and DELL Gold partner we have the expertise and experience to recommend a stack of DELL R540 servers running Server 2019 datacentre. This provides a 100% software defined storage solution running on a hypervisor that combines the compute and storage performance across multiple servers, therefore eliminating the multiple tiers of hardware, software and management into a single management tier. As requirements change and expansion is required due to growth or external factors Newton simply add another node into the HCI server stack to aggregate the resources across the Hyper converged infrastructure.

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"As a result of consistent and sustained growth, Newton Property Management now have three national offices – this increase in offices and resources has meant we rely heavily on system performance, speed and reliability. As a result of our old kit reaching the end of its life, we were faced with a decision to replace like for like, or future proof to cover us for the steady growth which was set to continue. Certum made what could have been a painful process, an absolute breeze. Everything from the initial quoting, right through to install – Certum were informative, efficient and on the ball. We knew we were in safe hands with Certum overseeing the project."

– Kirsten O'Neill, Director

The Business Benefits

Overall management and operations are massively simplified with only one system to manage. Costs are greatly reduced as over provisioning is eliminated and management time is greatly reduced due to the reduction in complexity. They have reclaimed space and reduced power consumption which aligns with their 2020 Green Vision. Newton are now able to accelerate deployment of services, have improved performance, the peace of mind of having a highly available infrastructure capable of sustaining multiple hardware failures without bringing down services and all at a fraction of the cost of building out a traditional IT infrastructure.

CASE STUDY

ST COLUMBAS SCHOOL

About the client

St Columba's School is one of Scotland's highest achieving co-educational independent day schools for pupils aged 3–18. Consistently ranked within the top 10 independent schools in Scotland, St Columba's is renowned for its first class education and academic excellence and is located in Kilmacolm, one of Scotland's most beautiful villages.

Name: St Columba's School

Sector: Education

Client since: 2018

Services provided by Certum:

 IT Services

 Cloud Services

How We Helped

St Columba's has an internal IT team who is responsible for all first line support calls and the day-to-day running of internal services, operations and technologies. Second and third line issues and the development of a long-term digital strategy have been outsourced to a Managed IT Services provider.

Like many multi-faceted businesses, the need to ensure the company network functions in a reliable and secure way, is paramount. As a leading independent school, relevant expertise is necessary to support a rich, varied and progressive digital curriculum. Establishing a partnership with a new information and communications technology company allows St Columba's School the flexibility to take advantage of technologies and services that would benefit both staff and pupils and to maintain the highest levels of security and uptime on their networks.

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Certum's remit includes managing their Microsoft Azure and Office 365 components, monitoring the network, services and applications, alerting and remediation and second and third line support escalation for 600 students and 150 staff.

As well as providing our Managed IT services, Certum are also acting as a virtual strategy group responsible for the management, strategy and execution of IT infrastructure and services for St Columba's through monthly planning and strategy meetings.

Results

Through their relationship with Certum, St Columba's benefits from consistently managed services support for their everyday needs and a monitoring and alerting platform that highlights where improvements are required to the systems to provide a better experience for both staff and pupils.

Certum has complemented the School's vision by guiding them in their next steps for IT development. As the relationship matures, and through our continuous improvement program, we will advance our understanding of St Columba's requirements and assist in mapping the best path for them to drive transformational change as a successful modern School.

CASE STUDY

RESEARCH RESOURCE

About the client

Research Resource specialises in providing high quality quantitative and qualitative research services across the full spectrum of public and private sector organisations. They have multi-disciplinary research experience and expertise across a wide range of social policy areas. Their consultants bring a wealth of expertise in research techniques, creativity and innovation to the provision of their market and social research services.

researchresource

Name: Research Resource

Sector: Professional Services

Client since: 2010

Services provided by Certum:

IT Services

Cloud Services

THE CHALLENGE

The Glasgow based firm decided to move from an on premise Microsoft infrastructure to a fully cloud based infrastructure utilising Microsoft 365 when it became clear that its clients, which are primarily public and local government authorities, wanted a higher level of security. With Covid causing a large percentage of their staff to work from home, Research Resource decided that now was the best time to go all in with Microsoft 365 and transform into a work from anywhere first company, backed by the security that Microsoft 365 would give them.

As a research organization Research Resource have to increase their staff count temporarily to facilitate large contracts meaning licensing costs always had to match the maximum amount of users they could have at any given time, by moving to the cloud they knew they could scale the licenses up and down as needed, this would enable them to realise thousands of pounds of cost savings over the next 5 years.

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There were 3 key areas we had to address during the migration.

- **Getting the company to embrace an entirely new way of working**

- **Minimizing the disruption of a companywide cloud migration**

- **Realizing enough value in new functionality, security and lower licensing costs to justify the change over**

THE SOLUTION

In order to facilitate the increased need for security Certum consulted with Research Resources management team and designed their cloud infrastructure to include

- **Conditional Access Policies**

- **Device Policies**

- **Update Policies**

- **Collaboration Policies**

- **DLP Policies**
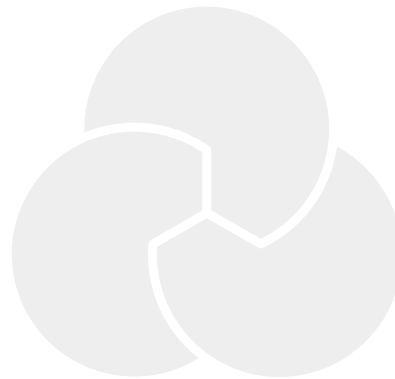
These policies allowed Research Resource to meet the new security guidelines set out by their public sector and enterprise client base and gave them the confidence that their staff could all safely work from home or any remote location.

As we were removing the physical servers which included their on premise active directory and data repositories we provisioned a new Azure AD and migrated all users and devices to it to take advantage of all the new linked security policies.

Finally we migrated their data shares to a mix of SharePoint, OneDrive and Teams allowing all staff to access existing data and collaborate more effectively both internally and externally backed up by the new collaboration security policies.

As Research Resource had recently migrated their on premise line of business applications to their cloud versions and had a fully cloud hosted VoIP phone system they were now able to work fully remote, fully cloud based.

After the migration Research staff were given guides and training on how to make the best of the new infrastructure and our helpdesk as always was available to answer any further questions or resolve any issues.

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THE BENEFITS

The migration to Microsoft 365 has transformed the way Research Resource work and given them the confidence that they can now work remotely full time while feeling secure in the knowledge that their new security policies give them a heightened level of security which had been requested by their clients.

Cloud applications like Teams and SharePoint have opened up communication lines and increased collaboration both internally and externally.

The migration has also reduced Research Resources licensing and hardware costs and enabled them to avoid any further large capital IT expenditure in the future.

Overall Benefits:

- **Secure, centralised data and application access**

- **Anytime, anywhere access**

- **Unrivalled flexibility**

- **Centralised communication and collaboration**

- **Reduced capex expenditure**

Who is Certum

Certum have been established for over 15 years, making us one of the longest running IT services companies based in Glasgow. We strive to be the very best at what we do. With our vast experience in IT and Telecoms we are experts in aligning business goals with technology and providing a single point of service for all your IT requirements.

We pride ourselves on our excellent customer service and believe that every company can benefit from an outsourced IT partner who can deliver a first-class service, attention to detail and industry recognised technical excellence.

OUR SERVICES

IT Managed Services

A strategic service that supports your day-to-day operations, security, helpdesk and network, while also tackling your regulatory compliance and data privacy obligations. Our unrivalled IT support capabilities can help all sizes of business and internal IT teams, no matter what your needs.

Cloud Services

We can lead you to your cloud adoption goals be they private, hybrid or public through our cloud consulting and integration services. So, if you're wondering whether you should opt for SaaS applications or servers on-premise, private or public cloud, or even hosted VMs with IaaS, we're here to help.

Telecom Services

We believe efficient communications are key. At every step we work with you to understand your business needs, defining the most effective options, whether it be connectivity, MPLS networks, VoIP phone systems or mobile solutions.

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Our Partners

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PARTNER
GOLD

Veeam
PROPARTNER

Microsoft Partner | Gold Collaboration and Content
Gold Datacenter
Gold Cloud Productivity
Gold Small and Midmarket Cloud S
Microsoft

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