



Azure in a hurry

Options Resourcing

Options Resourcing are a fast growing, ambitious recruitment agency. Founded in 2011, they provide high quality temporary and permanent candidates and specialise in the build, industrial, technical, and commercial sectors.

They have offices in London, Bristol, Solent, Haywards Heath, Coventry, Exeter and Cardiff and require all their staff to have access to their core recruitment software and database.



Requirements

Options Resourcing's existing IT provider planned to cease providing IT services at short notice, which meant Options Resourcing needed to move fast to secure a new platform for all their staff, and migrate their business-critical applications and data.

There were only around 30 days to find a new provider, scope the solution, plan and implement the migration. The clock was ticking.

Their core applications need to be accessible from all their office locations, a complex application and database needed to be migrated and accessible, and the solution needed to be secure and managed. No small task.



Key Challenges

Quickly some challenges were identified that had to be addressed, these included:

1. They had 30 days and needed a fast but robust solution
2. Third parties needed to be involved to support the migration of business-critical applications, requiring careful planning
3. Downtime needed to be avoided, Options Resourcing had to be able to continue running their business during the whole process
4. Security was key and a two-factor login was needed which worked across all their systems
5. They had multiple offices, which all needed to be moved to the new system simultaneously



The Solution

At SpiderGroup we've been working with Azure for some time, operating our own hybrid cloud platform and supporting customers with their dedicated environments.

We quickly identified that a dedicated remote desktop farm in Azure made the most sense for Options Resourcing. They were familiar with Microsoft Remote Desktop and already used Dell Wyse thin clients across most their offices.

We used the [Azure Pricing Calculator](#) to calculate the cost of the remote desktop farm for Options Resourcing, allowing them to get a really good idea of how much the platform was going to cost to run over the next few years. We utilised Azure Reserved Instances and Office 365 ProPlus licenses to license Office on the remote desktop, resulting in a very cost-effective solution.





The project in detail

After costing the proposed solution and getting the green light from Options Resourcing, it was all hands to the pumps to get the platform built and everything migrated by the deadline.

The short timescales meant we had to deliver this a lot faster than normal, so we spent time planning the project in detail, mapping out what needed to happen and when. Documenting all the parties involved and working out dependencies.

The planning was critical to the successful delivery of the project by the deadline, allowing us to identify exactly what resources we would need and when.

To improve performance and redundancy, and ensure the new remote desktop farm was cost effective, we used Azure File Storage AD Authentication. At the time this was an in-preview feature having only been released in late 2018. This allowed us to place all of Options Resourcing's Data in a highly resilient Azure Files Blob which would be accessible from all the servers in the farm, while at the same time only allowing staff to access files that were relevant to their role in the business.

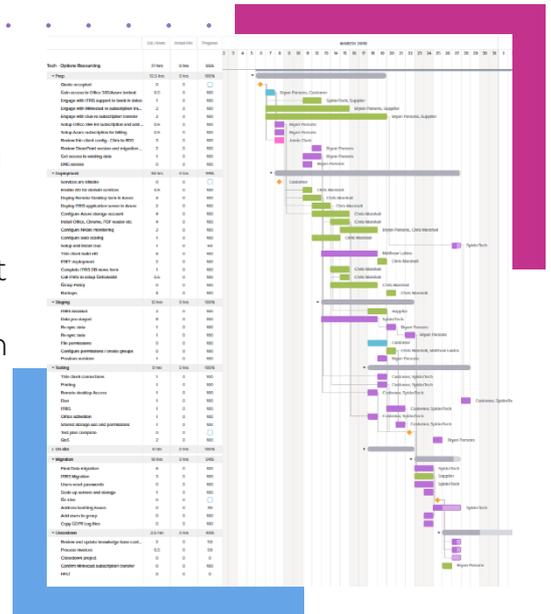
We implemented Duo two factor authentications across their remote desktop farm and Office 365 accounts. Duo is a great example of two factor authentication, with a simple enrolment process for staff and support for many third-party systems and applications.

SpiderGroup coordinated with the third-party system providers, ensuring they had access to the new platform, it met their system requirements, and they could perform both a test migration and live migration in the limited time available.

We arranged for engineers to be on-site at each of Options Resourcing's offices, preparing them for the switchover to the new systems and answering any questions staff had. We procured and installed newer thin clients on sites that needed them, to ensure they could access the new platform.

The migration was completed over the course of a weekend to ensure there was no impact on the day to day business of the client. Testing was carried out and the system signed off, ready for staff to log in on Monday morning. All data was pre-staged and ready for use with the correct permissions assigned.

Staff were able to continue working with minimal disruption, with continued access to their data and business critical applications.





The Outcome

Options Resourcing use the Azure Remote Desktop farm to effectively run their business. After the system went live, we monitored it closely and optimised it according to their usage to ensure they were getting the performance they needed but also not paying for unnecessary resources.

SpiderGroup provides support for the end users with any day-to-day IT issues as well as managing and monitoring the platform.

We've continued to optimise the platform and find further cost savings by automatically shutting down some of the servers in their infrastructure outside of core business hours, ensuring they are up and running again when most of the staff log in.

We've now moved onto the next project for Options Resourcing – a new Intranet site built on SharePoint Online, and plan to continue helping Options Resourcing get the best use of their IT in the future.

David Doherty, Director, Options Resourcing

“SpiderGroup helped us create a Remote Desktop farm in Azure at short notice. They ensured a smooth transition of all our data and applications and continue to support our Azure platform.”

