

CABOT FINANCIAL IRELAND BUILDS A NEW BUSINESS IN THE CLOUD



Cabot Financial Ireland, a leader in consumer credit management, combines its proven application software with contact center expertise to deliver outsourced credit and collections services for more than 40 credit unions across Ireland. The company relies on Sungard Availability Services (Sungard AS) to assure resilience for the IT infrastructure that supports this critical service. Cabot is now teaming with Sungard AS to complete a phased migration to the AWS cloud, fully managed by Sungard AS, to support its primary and recovery environments.

RESULTS

- Cloud-based recovery in AWS meets stringent SLA targets and cost constraints
- Fully managed AWS solution frees IT staff from daily monitoring and management
- Scalable DR approach can support rapid business growth
- Business resilience assured with 2-hour RPO, 4-hour RTO

SERVICES

- Managed AWS
- Cloud Recovery — AWS
- Managed Backup — AWS
- Workplace Recovery Services

ABOUT CABOT FINANCIAL IRELAND

Cabot Financial Ireland, part of Cabot Credit Management Group, is Ireland's leading ethical acquirer and manager of consumer debt. Formed in 2007, the company provides business process outsourcing services and assists credit unions in their credit management activities. The company also offers credit servicing and debt purchase, and serves clients across the banking, telecom, and utility industries.

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Gerard Clear

Head of IT

Cabot Financial Ireland





THE CHALLENGE

Designing a fully managed public cloud

In 2014, when Cabot Financial Ireland began providing its credit management application software to financial institutions, the company initially worked through a third-party administrator — which in turn relied on Sungard AS for data center hosting services. Recently, Cabot decided to bring both contracts in house and build a business process outsourcing (BPO) business, in which the company would take end-to-end responsibility for a credit union's credit management operations and provide it as a service.

“Obviously, IT is a critical foundation for that service, to ensure we're fully accountable for resilience and security and have the flexibility to scale with ease,” says Gerard Clear, head of IT for Cabot Financial Ireland. “In our first conversations directly with Sungard AS, it became apparent that their previous hosting contract lacked some of the recovery capabilities we needed to assure the resilience of the BPO business.”

Clear talked with several vendors, including Sungard AS, to explore options and approaches for infrastructure, disaster recovery, and associated

services. Prior to his role at Cabot, Clear spent nearly a decade working for managed services providers, so he was a particularly well-informed evaluator of such services.

“The Sungard AS approach stood out,” says Clear. “Their team took the time to learn about the Cabot business and our requirements, as well as the challenges we faced given limited resources. In several planning sessions we worked through the details to design a solution, fully managed by Sungard AS, that could give us a resilient, secure, flexible platform based on AWS cloud resources for both our primary and recovery environments.”

The new AWS environment can scale to meet the needs of the growing BPO business — currently supporting 45 credit unions — as well as other key aspects of the Cabot Financial Ireland business.

Cabot commits to deliver a very high level of service to its credit union clients. “Obviously we have SLAs with credit unions,” says Clear. “An important part of that is an uptime guarantee of 99.9%, which Sungard AS has consistently met for us.



THE SOLUTION

Listening is key to best-fit approach

The BPO service relies on highly trained Cabot call-center agents working with individuals who have fallen behind on debt payments. The agents track all contacts and progress in the Cabot-developed credit management application, which credit unions then monitor to understand the status of their non-performing loan portfolio.

“Our goal is to help every customer on their financial recovery journey. We listen to their circumstances, then come up with an affordable repayment and restructure plan that helps them recover as quickly as possible from their debt,”

explains Clear. “Once customers realize we're truly listening and trying to find a solution, the telephone conversations change big time.”

“We strive to meet high ethical standards and are regularly audited — not only by our clients, but by the Central Bank of Ireland and third-party auditors,” says Clear. “Every week, our management team sits down and listens to several different agent conversations with customers, to see how we're performing and how we can continuously improve our efforts.”



Clear sees parallels between Cabot's focus on listening to its customers and the kind of consultative approach he's found in his interactions with Sungard AS.

"Sungard AS took the time to size up exactly what our business required," says Clear. "We weren't looking for the Rolls Royce of systems — we wanted a resilient infrastructure tailored to our business that took advantage of the economies of the AWS cloud. Sungard AS had the expertise to bring together all of the pieces and back it with 24/7 management and monitoring."

Assuring compliance with standards and regulations

Working with Sungard AS also simplified Cabot's need to comply with numerous industry standards

and regulatory requirements. "Our clients want us to align with industry best practices, whether that's ISO or NIST or CIS controls. We've aligned the Cabot business with CIS controls, but some of our clients expect our DR as a service to align with the ISO 22301 standards," explains Clear. "By working with Sungard AS, we don't need to have certifications in those areas, because we're outsourcing the requirements to a company that has all of those certifications and competencies already in place."

Cabot also benefits from Sungard AS' investments in compliance with broader EU standards. The services from Sungard AS are designed to meet EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) standards for resilience, security, and privacy, and thereby help Cabot in its mission to protect confidential consumer data.



THE RESULTS

IT staff sheds infrastructure responsibilities

The Cabot call center in Dublin supports more than 100 agents who work with customers of Cabot's credit union clients. If that site should experience a disaster or disruption, the company needs a way to continue its operations and meet strict SLA commitments. Cabot contracted with Sungard AS for Workplace Recovery Services, which provide an alternate brick-and-mortar site for key staff, equipped with essential technology and connectivity. The Sungard AS recovery site is in an area well served by Dublin's public transportation system, and located close to where many Cabot employees live.

Clear believes Cabot gains significant advantages by working with a single trusted supplier for so many aspects of its IT infrastructure. "Sungard AS built a complete managed service and backed it with 24/7 management and monitoring," he says. "With the online portals they provide, we have a

full view into what's going on — whether it's the replication of our servers, the DR as a service, the production environment for the credit union solutions, or our off-site backups."

"Instead of Cabot going to four or five different vendors for these services, we work with the same people constantly," he continues. "The engagement from the Sungard AS project team is excellent. They're delivering under the timelines we've set, and we're constantly kept in the loop. We have peace of mind knowing that Sungard AS is taking care of everything."

As Cabot hands off infrastructure responsibility to Sungard AS, Clear says the company's IT staff can redirect its energy to other areas. "We can do all the really good stuff that people in IT want to do — to put out the fires once and for all, and truly manage IT on behalf of the business."

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