



MANAGING DATA
SECURELY

Case Study Millstream Associates

STANDING TOGETHER

MILLSTREAM ASSOCIATES BOLSTERS BACKUP AND DISASTER RECOVERY WITH MANAGED SERVICES

eProcurement expert Millstream Associates turns to MTI for a long-term, consultative-based relationship. The partnership is characterised by MTI identifying and supporting Millstream's immediate and long-term business goals and delivering services such as business continuity and 24x7 virtual infrastructure monitoring through a managed service to support the business.

CLIENT PROFILE

Millstream Associates are a team of specialists with extensive experience and knowledge in delivering eProcurement systems and services to organisations that operate in the public sector. The company essentially dovetails tenders with its clients' expertise by mapping algorithms against approximately 5,000 codes that are used when issuing tenders. It helps bidding organisations save large amounts of money when applying for tenders and dramatically increases their chances of success.



AT A GLANCE

Industry
eProcurement

The challenge

Millstream Associates needed expert oversight for its virtualised infrastructure given that it lacked the in-house resources to manage it.

The solution

MTI carried out a deep gap-analysis of Millstream's needs and identified backup and business continuity as key areas that needed addressing, along with centralised management of the infrastructure. It then designed and delivered a tailored managed service via a private cloud.

Benefits

- Bulletproof business continuity
- Foundation for long-term business growth
- Deep rooted consultative relationship with MTI
- Proactive and responsive account management

At the same time, Millstream also specialises in developing and supporting national and regional portals for governments and public sector organisations, and is recognised as a leading authority on public sector portal services. At any one time, the company has approximately 4,000 clients on its books ranging from sole traders and SMEs to global enterprises. The Aberdeen-based company employs 70 people, including ten IT specialists responsible for developing and enhancing its systems.

THE CHALLENGE

Millstream has grown from a one man team to one of the most successful companies in its field. As the company has grown, so too has its IT infrastructure. It has a ten-strong IT team who are essentially developers focused on developing innovative eProcurement tools and services.

This team of developers looked after and managed the infrastructure on an ad-hoc basis, even as and when new technologies were added. As virtualisation gained ground in the wider industry, Millstream understood the clear benefits that could be gained by introducing VMware into the environment.

However, there was a problem as David Thomson, Head of IT, Millstream, explains: "IT is such a huge field and it's difficult in a company our size to employ experts in each area. We specialise in development in the procurement field and we're extremely successful in what we do but we lacked the in-house knowledge to look after our infrastructure properly."

In practise this meant that layers of risk had built up over time. For instance, the storage and server platforms, while good, were actually out of warranty and its virtualisation project had stalled, essentially because the expertise required to manage a virtualised infrastructure was missing.

At the same time, while the company had backup procedures in place, virtualisation was not bolstered with disaster recovery. Given that Millstream hosts software on behalf of clients, it was an area that needed addressing. David Thomson adds: "Our infrastructure did what it needed to but we felt like we needed experts to help us bring it up to a gold standard."

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It was obvious from the outset that MTI was viewing the issues we had within the wider business context rather than trying to push a technology sell. They are on our side and identify potential business obstacles well ahead of time. This has led to a deep-rooted relationship and one which we are happy to continue with.

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**David Thomson, Head of IT,
Millstream Associates**

THE SOLUTION

Millstream began an engagement with MTI, a global solutions and service provider with 25 years of experience. What attracted Millstream to MTI was its consultative approach, which was based on determining the company's specific issues and developing solutions based on its immediate and future needs.

The first thing MTI did was place an experienced consultant on site to understand its business challenges. A full gap analysis was carried out. This was characterised by a methodical approach in which all the challenges were mapped out within a business context, incorporating Millstream's needs for the coming to three to five years.

The analysis revealed two business areas that needed addressing: high availability and business continuity. Within the context of Millstream's business these needed to be 'bulletproof'. David Thomson adds: "We knew we had infrastructure problems but rather than focus on the technology MTI wrapped everything up in a business context. This was refreshing and gave us the sense that they were looking out for us and not just interested in a technology sale."

Following the completion of the gap analysis and the understanding that Millstream's IT team lacked the time and resource for full-time network management, MTI suggested a managed serviced based on a private cloud.

This consisted of backup as-a-service (BaaS), management of the virtualised infrastructure, as well as a managed service provided by the MTI Secure Operations Centre (SOC) and the introduction of EMC storage to ensure high availability, business continuity and disaster recovery. MTI ensures daily backups of vital data, as well as proactively monitoring and managing the virtualised farm, ensuring mission-critical applications continue to perform optimally.

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It just works without any issues which is very reassuring. Account management is excellent and MTI is really on the ball. They call us to let us know about any issues which they have resolved and from my side I can just pick up the phone and talk to someone immediately.

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**David Thomson, Head of IT,
Millstream
Associates**

**FIND OUT HOW MTI CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS
TALK TO AN EXPERT**