Office 365

Luxury Sports Car Manufacturer Drives Collaboration and Speeds Business Processes

Overview

Country or Region: United Kingdom
Industry: Manufacturing—Automotive

Customer Profile
Aston Martin is a British manufacturer of luxury sports cars. Founded in 1913, Aston Martin has evolved into an automotive icon synonymous with luxury, performance, and craftsmanship.

Business Situation
To maintain its focus on building luxury sports cars, Aston Martin looked for ways to provide employees with the latest communications and collaboration capabilities, without increasing IT administration.

Solution
Aston Martin chose Microsoft Office 365 to provide email, instant messaging, presence, conferencing, and collaboration capabilities for its employees.

Benefits
- Delivers reliable access to latest capabilities
- Frees IT to focus on solving business problems
- Provides security and compliance capabilities required by a global business
- Improved collaboration across the company

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Daniel Roach-Rooke, IT Infrastructure Manager, Aston Martin

Aston Martin builds beautiful sports cars. Its employees are passionate about their work and challenge themselves to stretch the limits of automotive performance. Equally passionate about the business, the IT staff at Aston Martin wanted to focus on strategic projects and work more proactively to improve processes and technologies. To free IT resources from routine administration tasks while still providing the latest communications and collaboration capabilities, Aston Martin chose Microsoft Office 365. The cloud-based solution provides employees with familiar Office applications, plus enterprise-grade email, conferencing, and collaboration solutions. By providing easy access to business-critical productivity tools, enhanced security, and reliability through Office 365, Aston Martin is able to foster collaboration and improve business processes while reducing IT administration.

Microsoft

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Aston Martin's new halo sports car, Vanquish, is the result of close collaboration between designers, engineers, suppliers, and the craftsmen and women who build them.

Situation

Aston Martin is one of the world's best-known luxury automotive brands. Located in Gaydon, England, Aston Martin produces a wide range of sports cars. Regardless of the model, each Aston Martin automobile is handcrafted by highly skilled engineers and technicians to express the company's core values of power, beauty, and soul.

In addition to passionate, skilled employees, technology plays a key role at Aston Martin as the company continues to push the boundaries of automotive performance, while delivering cutting-edge design and comfort. The company relies on the latest computer-aided design and communications technologies to enable close collaboration with suppliers.

An IT infrastructure and operations team of 15 is responsible for the technology that enables Aston Martin to produce its distinctive cars. Employees demand the same level of passion and excellence from their IT department that they put into the cars they build. "We have employees based in regional offices in a number of countries around the world, and they expect to be able to connect to their email or other services from anywhere at any time, and from any device," says Daniel Roach-Rooke, IT Infrastructure Manager at Aston Martin.

To maintain focus on its core mission of building luxury sports cars, the IT department has been moving to a cloud-based computing model for many functions, moving its email to a Microsoft-hosted service in 2009. In 2011, when it heard about the Microsoft Office 365 cloud-based offering, which provides email, communications, and collaboration capabilities along with Microsoft Office, Aston Martin saw an opportunity to expand its current productivity tools without shifting the IT department's focus away from higher-value projects.

Solution

Prior to selecting Office 365, Aston Martin evaluated other cloud offerings in the marketplace and looked at the possibility of deploying Microsoft Exchange Server on-premises. Office 365 proved to be the best option. "Office 365 offers everything we need. It is designed for the kind of environment we have, with access from around the globe and different levels of services to match our employees' needs," says Roach-Rooke.

For its office staff, Aston Martin selected the Office 365 E3 plan, which provides licenses for Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus, Exchange Online, Lync Online, and SharePoint Online.

Aston Martin worked with Microsoft Services Premier Support to migrate its email accounts to Office 365. "Microsoft Services Premier Support was with us for the entire migration. They worked with us to plan the move and mitigate the risk of moving our employee mailboxes in one

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The company upgraded all of its computers to Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010, now named Office 365 ProPlus, as part of the migration and, because Office 365 provides Office licenses for up to five devices, employees were able to deploy Microsoft Office on their personal computers and tablets at home. Employees have also set up their personal smartphones to access their corporate email accounts. "Office 365 provides us with the tools to enforce security policies on personal smartphones so that we can offer that access to employees. We can enforce PIN policies or wipe the phone if necessary," says Roach-Rooke.

Office 365 offers additional security and compliance capabilities, which Aston Martin has now put in place. Employees can archive email into a hosted, personal archive. The IT staff can place legal holds on mailboxes, rapidly perform eDiscovery, and enforce retention policies. These capabilities are essential to most enterprise businesses, and Aston Martin appreciates the ease with which they can be applied in Exchange Online. Exchange Online Protection provides virus protection and spam filtering on incoming email messages. "We receive more than 1.5 million spam email messages per day, so it's great to have all messages filtered before they hit our network," says Roach-Rooke. To enable employees to control access to proprietary information, Aston Martin plans to implement Information Rights Management (IRM) using Windows Azure Active Directory Rights Management, which is included with the Office 365 E3 plan.

Administration is more secure with role-based access control for Exchange Online and Lync Online, which enables

administrators to set up fine-grained levels of access for IT staff. "We have enabled the service desk to create accounts for new users and handle simple tasks, while our tier-3 support staff has much wider administrative rights," says Roach-Rooke. Active Directory Federation Services through Windows Azure provides single sign-on capabilities for on-premises and Office 365 solutions.

Aston Martin has also deployed SharePoint Online in addition to its on-premises Microsoft SharePoint Server 2013 deployment. Today, employees use SharePoint Online for external collaboration with suppliers or other stakeholders that may be involved in projects. "SharePoint Online provides us with a secure way to collaborate with partners. It's easy for them to access the sites through Microsoft accounts we validate," says Roach-Rooke. In the future, Aston Martin plans to merge the two environments into a hybrid deployment for additional flexibility.

The company did not previously have an instant messaging and presence solution, so the capabilities in Lync Online have been widely adopted by employees. "Lync Online is one example where our employees are quickly taking advantage of great new capabilities as soon as we provide them," says Roach-Rooke. "Presence information is so useful, especially for communicating with remote offices. Desktop sharing during Lync audio conferences has also been popular." For instance, the marketing team uses Lync Online to share ideas and proofs for marketing campaigns. Aston Martin has also enabled Lync federation with several suppliers to facilitate closer collaboration in the supply chain.

Benefits

By adopting Office 365, the Aston Martin IT department can provide employees with

the latest communications and collaboration capabilities, which they use to continue their pursuit of automotive perfection. Roach-Rooke says, "Office 365 gives our employees the technology they need to drive the business forward."

A Fully Managed Service
Aston Martin wants all of its employees, including IT staff, to maintain their focus on producing great sports cars. "Office 365 is fully managed; we don't have to worry about it. We don't think about storage, capacity planning, external access, or downtime. It's a real luxury," says Roach-Rooke. "Our business has been using Office 365 for about a year now and we've had fast, reliable performance with no significant outages."

Office 365 also helps to simplify administration for the IT staff. "Office 365 is fully integrated with our Windows Server Active Directory service, so we only have to do things once," says Roach-Rooke. "When we bring on new staff, the service desk can create the account and that's it. Office 365 does the rest."

The IT team is now able to use its time to address business problems and improve productivity. "We were stretched too thin before to really be proactive, but now we have the time to talk to the business and really help," says Roach-Rooke. "Sometimes a simple suggestion like moving an Excel spreadsheet into SharePoint to provide access control and version control can have a big impact for a team. We have positively changed the perception of IT and been able to show our passion for the business."

Security and Compliance for a Global Brand
Aston Martin has transformed itself over the past decade from a British sports car manufacturer to a global luxury brand. With

this transformation has come the need to implement tighter security and compliance procedures. "Intellectual property is one of Aston Martin's most valuable assets, and we trust Microsoft technologies to keep it safe," says Roach-Rooke. "We are very comfortable that Microsoft will be able to maintain a secure service."

Technologies like IRM and the ability to enforce legal holds make it easy to implement security policies so that Aston Martin can remain compliant. The company is also deploying Windows Intune to help manage remote devices. Windows Intune is the cloud-based PC management service from Microsoft that will provide even better management capabilities for employees' mobile phones and tablets.

Efficient Collaboration
By using Office 365, Aston Martin employees can collaborate more efficiently. They can use the new capabilities in Lync Online, such as presence and desktop sharing, to connect and share information internally and with partners. SharePoint Online has also proven to be a great resource for employees, enabling them to share information externally with partners. "We tended to use email for collaboration in the past, but that can be inefficient. Lync and SharePoint have helped to speed interactions and ensure that our teams get the information they need in a timely manner," says Roach-Rooke.

For More Information

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For more information about Aston Martin products, visit the website at: www.astonmartin.com

Microsoft Office 365

The new Office provides anywhere access to your familiar Office applications—plus email, calendar, videoconferencing, and your most current documents—on almost any device, from PCs to smartphones to tablets.

For more information about Microsoft Office 365, go to: www.office365.com

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Document published May 2013

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