CLAREMONT

Location
United Kingdom

Industry
Technology

Website
www.claremont.co.uk

Solution
Hosting
Backup Solutions

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Claremont is a leading Oracle Managed Services Provider (MSP). Founded in 2004, it serves customers in the UK and beyond, offering managed services, cloud hosting and specialist Oracle consulting, including for Oracle E-Business Suite, Oracle Cloud Applications and Oracle software. These services also include Oracle application and database support and professional services to help clients implement and extend Oracle applications ranging from finance and ERP through to human resources and asset management.

Claremont specializes in Oracle's back-office systems, including HR, Finance and Procurement systems for large clients in the public and private sector. It has offered Oracle hosting on dedicated hardware for over a decade, including expansion into cloud hosting for virtualized Oracle applications, making it one of the only companies outside of Oracle to do so. It offers a range of cloud-based services, including infrastructure and platform as a service configuration on private and public cloud infrastructure, supporting both OracleVM and VMware.

The company has plans for 15% annual revenue growth over the next few years and wants to increase its margins even further. Managed Services represents half of its revenues, with plans to increase that to 75%. Hosting now plays an essential part in Claremont's goals, having dedicated a whole business line separate to its managed services operation.

Claremont provides hosting and MSP services, but relies on third-party providers to provide the back-end infrastructure. It adds value through its Oracle expertise, client-focused ITIL-based service processes, and firm support.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

As a company mainly serving large corporate clients, Claremont faces constant pressure to meet strict operational requirements quickly and efficiently. Delivery Director Jonathan Stuart originally joined the company to establish and grow its managed services business and as the hosting part of its operation grew, he became responsible for taking this side of the business to the same levels of success. This means guaranteeing service levels that fit customers' ever-evolving needs.

"Relying on a single provider for that agility risks creating service bottlenecks for Claremont's clients," Stuart explains. He needed to be able to call on another provider in addition to Claremont's incumbent infrastructure company to help the hosting operation stay agile and able to service the needs of a rapidly growing client base.

THE NEED FOR RELIABLE BACKUP SERVICES

The company needed to improve the underlying infrastructure supporting its cloud hosting operation. In particular, it wanted backup services that were separate from its incumbent IT service provider to enhance resilience.

"As part of our expansion and growth, we need to make sure that we've got that business continuity and resilience nailed down," he says. "High service levels, responsiveness and agility are all part of that."

Claremont had asked its incumbent provider to create a backup solution for its cloud-based hosting service, but it was unable to create one that supported Claremont's business needs.

The service provider offered a tailored, high-performance storage solution that would serve specific environments for vendors such as VMware. Still, Claremont wanted a leased disk arrangement that would provide simple, secure, redundant disk storage. This arrangement would provide the flexibility it needed to back up its cloud hosting data at a price point that made sense for its business.

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SOLUTION

When Claremont realized that it needed to approach another provider for its backup solution, it contacted Aptum due to its customer service and proven expertise in delivering and managing IT infrastructure from its data center locations in the UK.

The companies began working together on a solution that would take care of Claremont's backup needs, but the discussion quickly grew to cover more hosting infrastructure.

The relationship between Claremont and Aptum's team was so strong, that Aptum was happy to share considerable risk on the project. It conducted extensive design work on both the backup and the cloud hosting beginning in February 2019, before even signing a contract. The two companies didn't officially ink a deal until that September.

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RESILIENT, COST-EFFECTIVE BACKUP AND CLOUD HOSTING

Aptum provided a backup solution that Claremont's incumbent provider could not - an array of leased disks. These sit in a shared storage area network connected to an Oracle Backup Server for Claremont at Aptum's London data center in a fiber channel storage area network. Claremont can use its own expertise to manage the backup disks, optimizing its business continuity process to match its clients' needs closely.
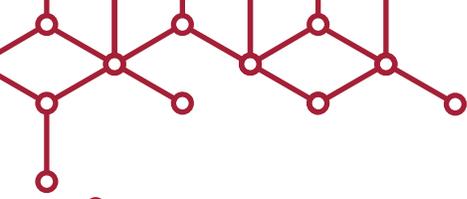
HOSTING

As fast as you want it to be. As reliable as you need it to be. A broad spectrum of managed services for servers, storage, databases, commerce and business applications. Backed by Aptum's 24/7 expert support.

Aptum provides cloud hosting infrastructure for Claremont at its Portsmouth data center, which hosts three Oracle virtual machine servers managed by a fourth Oracle VM Management Server. To accommodate Claremont's storage needs, Aptum used its SolidFire storage service to provide fast and flexible disk space. It offers 27 Tb of capacity, which Claremont can divide up however it needs, including on a per-customer basis.

Stuart recalls that the SolidFire storage was crucial to the success of the contract. Whereas the company just needed a large collection of leased disks for its backup system, it had more nuanced needs for its critical cloud hosting storage. Leased disks didn't provide the flexibility that they needed to support a cloud-based service that scales storage to suit changing customer needs.

SolidFire fitted Claremont's needs perfectly and the commercial flexibility of per-Gb pricing met Claremont's need for back-to-back pricing that aligns their storage costs with the pricing model for their end customers.

The cloud hosting assets are connected via an internal 10Gb fiber network for maximum performance. Aptum also connects the Portsmouth and London sites via its own MPLS-based redundant core routing network. It expanded on Claremont's request, joining both the Portsmouth cloud hosting site and the backup site to its incumbent service provider's data center. That saved Stuart the headache of sourcing a third supplier to handle the networking, enabling him to simplify his services by keeping them all under a single contract with Aptum. This also made network support easier.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

PERSONALIZED SERVICE

Claremont prides itself on delivering a high quality of service to its clients. It regularly wins business from larger integrators who cannot offer a personal touch. Stuart was worried that a multinational service provider like Aptum might not be able to give Claremont the same level of service, but his fears proved unfounded.

"The quality of service has always been there," he says. "The local team seems to have just the right amount of freedom to give us what we need, how we need it. It also clearly wants to deliver a high level of quality service for us."

Continuity is key for Aptum, which quickly brought in a technical account manager and a customer experience manager to ensure that it could handle all of Claremont's needs. It did this early in the project to build relationships during the pre-sales period and ensure that Claremont felt looked after from the beginning. This made things smoother by the time the companies reached the service delivery phase.

"They designed not just the technical solution, but also designed the service," Stuart says. "That meant by the time we signed the contract; we understood exactly how everything was going to work and had a lot of confidence in the people that we would be working with."

Under Aptum's model, a service manager handles everyday services, ensuring that Claremont gets fast, consistent responses to its service requests.

BACKUP SOLUTIONS

Aptum's managed backup solutions are designed to meet your unique business continuity needs. Our knowledgeable experts protect your data by leveraging best-fit technologies such as SolidFire SAN, Tivoli and Veeam, or public cloud services like Amazon and Azure to replicate your data in the cloud.
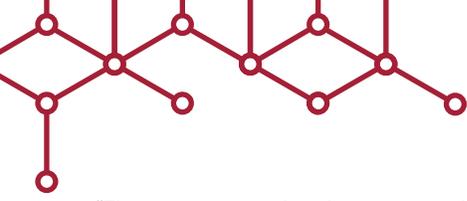
"The experience is that things just work. When there's something to be done, it's done quickly, and it's done right first time," Stuart says, adding that this valuable characteristic is rarer than you might think. "Don't underestimate the number of organizations out there, particularly in IT support, that just miss the mark."

The technical account manager's background with Claremont gives him the knowledge he needs to conduct informed technology discussions with the company.

"Having that technical account manager that already knows our solution and knows us gives us such a head start," he says. "We really, really value that."

An extended team steers the relationship between the two companies with monthly service meetings to ensure that everything is on track. Claremont's level of trust in Aptum is so high that the company regularly connects Aptum staff with its own employees and customers to field technical discussions.

FLEXIBLE COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Commercial flexibility was a crucial component of the Aptum-Claremont relationship. Claremont did not have a customer primed for migration to the new system during the cloud hosting deployment phase, but it still wanted to press ahead with the solution. Aptum created a flexible pricing model to reflect the extra time that Claremont needed to ready its first customer for migration.

"It created commercial solutions that worked for me, and that continued beyond the first contract being signed," Stuart says. "That's the way I like to do business, and for me that's a sign of a real partnership."

Aptum demonstrated this long-term commitment further by referring new business to Claremont when signing clients of its own. This partnership-based approach benefits both companies in the long term.

TECHNICAL FLEXIBILITY

Oracle's licensing requirements around virtual machines are especially complex, with per-core pricing that varies across different processor architectures. Claremont's cloud hosted at Aptum ensures Oracle license compliance while minimizing license costs for customers.

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LOWER RISK THROUGH HIGHER RESILIENCE

Claremont's extensive public and private-sector clients have strict service level requirements. System outages can have a disastrous effect on their operations. Spreading services to an extra provider with a different infrastructure enables the Claremont to de-risk its operations and those of its end customers, backed by a redundant, high-performance network with a strong track record in reliability and performance.

"We're now operating out of four different locations, which means customers' systems are distributed in multiple data centers across two different partners," Stuart says. "That's an incredibly powerful proposition for our clients."

With Aptum's infrastructure now powering both cloud hosting and backup services for Claremont, Stuart has peace of mind. He knows that his solution extends beyond mere network connections and storage to cover the human element. He has service he is happy with from a team that he is confident in. With the support of Aptum, Claremont can take its hosting business to the next level of success.
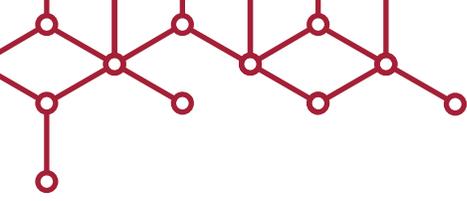
WHY NOT PUT APTUM TO WORK FOR YOU?

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ABOUT APTUM

Aptum is a global hybrid multi-cloud managed service provider delivering complex and high-performance cloud solutions with an integrated secure network. Using its Data As Infrastructure™ approach, Aptum solves complex technology challenges with total solutions and tailored options that drive tangible business outcomes and maximize the value of its clients' technology investments. Aptum's cloud and global network solutions, underpinned with expert managed and professional services, offer genuine choice and adaptability with international reach spanning North America, Latin America, Europe and the United Kingdom. Aptum is a portfolio company of Digital Colony, a global investment firm dedicated to strategic opportunities in digital infrastructure. For more information, visit www.aptum.com.