

northdoor casebook



Northdoor establishes a platform for First Counsel's future growth with a scalable cloud platform for disaster recovery and email

Based in the City of London, First Counsel is a boutique recruitment consultancy specialising in the legal sector. Due to the number of applications from candidates and the need to send CVs to clients, email was of particular importance to First Counsel. Northdoor had implemented a cloud-based disaster recovery (DR) solution in September 2011, comprising First Council's first foray into cloud computing. Satisfied with the results, the company began to consider broadening their cloud-based services to include email.

As First Counsel's long-term IT provider, Northdoor recommended a cloud-based Microsoft Exchange 2010 email solution. Based on the DataCenter on Demand™ platform supplied by Northdoor's award-winning cloud partner, Rise, the service included disaster recovery provision, meaning that First Counsel's email would be covered against potential data loss as well as achieving the benefits of cloud based email.

The challenge: finding a viable alternative to on-premise hardware

As Debbie Coshell, Office Manager at First Counsel, explains, "A good experience with the Rise and Northdoor cloud DR service had given us the confidence to look at other possibilities. First Counsel's main goal was to have a reliable email service and access to the latest technology. We had aging hardware and found that the total cost of buying new hardware, licences and migrating systems was a lot higher than a solution in the cloud."

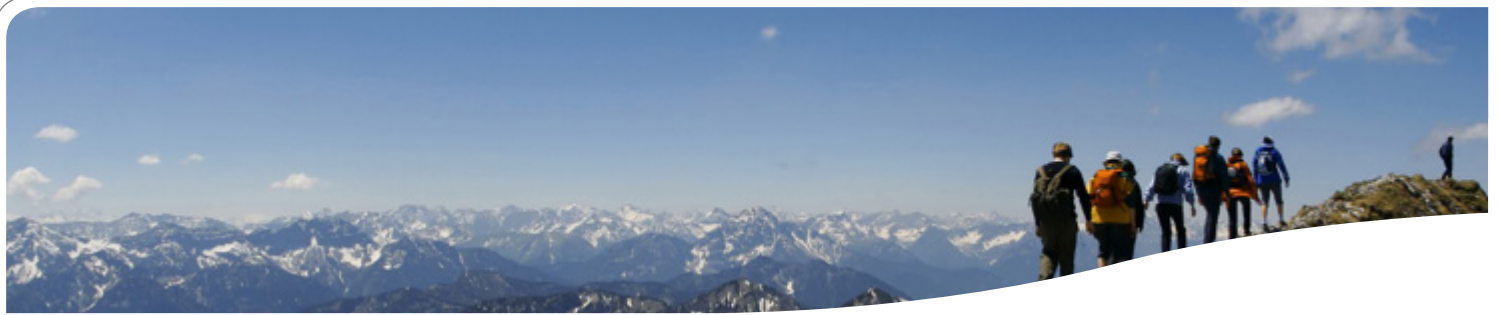
Benefits

- Reliable email with universal access
- Comprehensive data resiliency that covers both file servers and email
- A cost-effective solution without the need for up-front capital investments
- The ability to quickly provision more resources as needed
- An operating expenditure payment structure

"The solution has added a great deal of value to the organisation"

William Cock - Director at First Counsel





“After looking around at our options, we found that cloud had become a viable option. Historically, we were using cloud computing for DR purposes only. However, as we already had data replicated into Rise’s DR facility and were pleased with the results, it was a natural next step to add email.”

A further goal for First Counsel involved avoiding the risk of investing in infrastructure that might not be fully utilised, a common problem with some traditional IT solutions. This, combined with the scalability and change from a capital investment to an operating expenditure billing model for IT, convinced the organisation to extend their cloud-based services.

The solution: a dedicated Microsoft Exchange virtual server in the cloud

First Counsel moved their email over to a dedicated virtual server hosted on the DataCenter on Demand™ platform in April 2012. Running Microsoft Exchange 2010, the system included cloud-based data resiliency with automatic backups to the platform. This was then combined with the disaster recovery system that Northdoor had already built for the company.

First Counsel’s on-premise file server now periodically replicates all data to Rise’s cloud-based platform using Double-Take business continuity software. As a result, the organisation could quickly spin up a virtual machine within the cloud and restore their files remotely if there was a problem, effectively giving them the ability to create an operational replica of their on-premise server in the cloud.

Forming part of a two-tier DR solution, the virtual Exchange email server is automatically backed up to the cloud platform as well. This forms part of a broader solution that Northdoor gives their client. A fully managed service IT provider, Northdoor also supplies First Counsel with networking, security, infrastructure and live user help desk support.

Benefits: a platform for growth with greater flexibility, availability and data resiliency

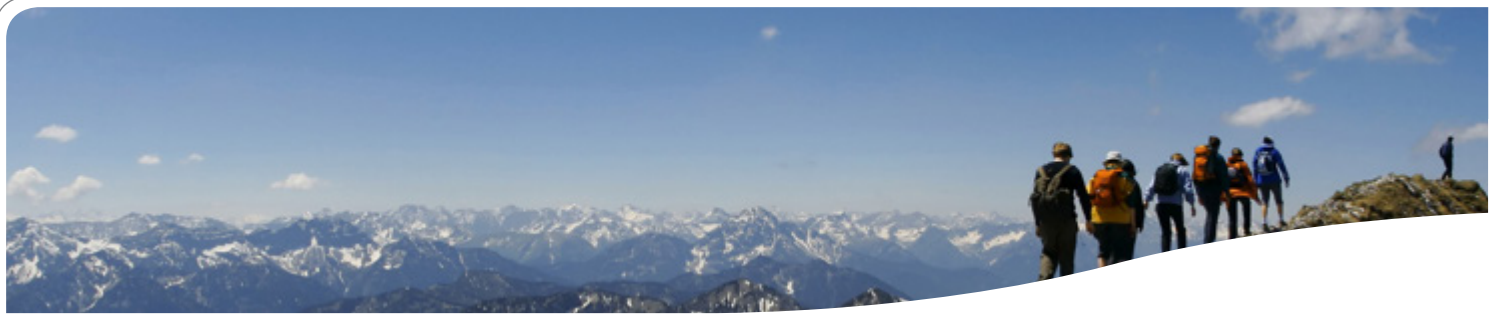
“The solution has added a great deal of value to the organisation”, says William Cock, Director at First Counsel. “We’ve met our goals and needs in that we’ve now got a resilient DR and Exchange environment in the cloud with the latest technology. It is flexible and provides us with scale, so we can ramp up as our business grows and we can decrease it if we need to.

“All their consultants are extremely knowledgeable, yet explain the benefits in a way that non-technical people can fully understand. At first we were apprehensive about cloud computing but Northdoor understand our business and recommended the most appropriate cloud solution for us. Having reliable email and a business continuity plan in place is a real benefit to us.”

William Cock - Director at First Counsel

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- Silver Software Asset Management



There's no risk of being left with hardware that we no longer have any use for. With the cloud, we only pay for what we use."

Such a solution is particularly advantageous for SMEs as data loss and system access interruptions can be detrimental to productivity and business operations. Business continuity solutions were traditionally something which small companies haven't had because of the cost. However, a cloud-based disaster recovery service gives them that at a very affordable rate.

As Debbie Coshell says, "We've been very happy because our email availability has greatly improved by moving to the cloud. We've had no downtime at all. We now have a cost-effective disaster recovery solution that works. Having reliable email and a business continuity plan in place is a real benefit to us. We're considering cloud-based file servers and remote desktops in the future when our next hardware refresh is due."

The final benefit involved the financial advantages associated with cloud computing. First Counsel now no longer need to worry about hardware depreciating or having to record the depreciation on the balance sheet. As an operating cost rather than a capital expenditure, the company can offset products against corporation tax, making the solution a lot better for the business from a financial perspective.

About Northdoor

Northdoor provides integrated information technology solutions. Its services encompass consultancy, application development, enterprise infrastructure and IT support and managed services. Originally founded in 1989 to serve the London Market, Northdoor has extended its expertise in insurance and banking to wider sectors, such as media, retail and property, with services now reaching over 200 businesses. Northdoor has a collaborative and high-touch customer care approach in delivering tailored solutions that help clients to achieve their business objectives.

To know more and do more, contact northdoor

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