



FCG

Hybrid solution provides FCG with reliable IT delivery and the right tools for growth

The financial consulting firm FCG sought a new partner for its IT service delivery, including hosting and end-user support. The company set its sights on a solution that could support its continued growth, while providing enhanced business support and control. By introducing Proact Hybrid Cloud and additional services from Proact, FCG has secured an IT platform that has room to grow.

FCG is a consulting firm that targets clients who are active in the financial markets. Founded in Sweden in 2008, the firm has established a broad presence thanks to a clear expansion strategy. The organisation now has four offices in three Nordic countries and between 2016 and 2018, FCG's workforce grew from 80 to 150.

Overview

Challenge

FCG had outgrown its existing IT infrastructure and needed a more resourceful IT partner to provide hosting/managed services, support and advice.

Solution

- Migration to Proact Hybrid Cloud, offering fully managed infrastructure for key business support applications.
- Completely renewed client hardware, with upgrade to Windows 10 and Office 365.

Benefits

- Functional upgrade of operating system and productivity applications conducted together with systems migration.
- Secure IT infrastructure solution ensures GDPR and financial market regulatory compliance.
- Proact's presence at multiple locations facilitates FCG's planned business expansion.
- Solution includes hardware leasing, allowing for convenient scaling and addition of new users.

The challenge

For its IT provisioning, FCG has always relied on external partners. The firm had various outsourcing and support arrangements, leased hardware, and also used cloud services. As the organisation continued to grow, FCG realised that it needed a more capable IT partner, one that could match its new size and requirements. FCG looked at a range of potential suppliers, inviting them to present their proposals for a larger and more scalable IT platform.

As FCG doesn't have an IT department or a CIO, the firm have its own consultants who make all the IT purchasing decisions. When IT security expert Magnus Nelding joined FCG, he was assigned to lead the procurement team.

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Magnus Nelding,
IT security expert
FCG

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FCG had envisioned a straight migration of the existing systems environment (from the previous outsourcing provider) to the new IT partner. Any system upgrades or major changes would have had to wait because they were seen as adding risk to the migration process.

Unlike other potential suppliers, Proact diverged from FCG’s prerequisites, submitting a proposal which was more clearly forward-looking. Proact presented a different view on some critical issues. For instance, FCG was advised by Proact to upgrade its users from Windows 7 to Windows 10, and to migrate office applications to the cloud by the means of Office 365.

“I was skeptical about these upgrades beforehand, but Proact made a great effort to convince us that this was the right thing to do. The good references from previous Office 365 migrations they had conducted really helped to put me at ease,” says Magnus Nelding.

How Proact Helped

The process of switching IT partners presented considerably larger obstacles than anticipated. FCG’s existing environment wasn’t running quite as smoothly as expected, and the premises for migration were not entirely consistent with what the firm actually had going on.

“It was a tricky situation for a new supplier to enter, but Proact managed this exemplarily, and in a professional fashion. We agreed on a solution with partly revised terms, based on the actual circumstances,” says Magnus Nelding.

In some instances, a complete reset was required and migrations were performed as an entirely new deployment. Following these changes, the original schedule was no longer realistic and it had become apparent that more time was needed to complete the migration. In mid-2018, after about a year, each subproject was complete and the administration phase could begin.

Business growth has contributed to changing the fundamentals of FCG’s IT environment. During the migration process, FCG has opened new offices in Malmö and Oslo, and more additions will most likely follow. The fact that Proact has presence and staff in each of these locations is an obvious advantage.

With most of its clients in the financial services industry, the typical FCG assignment involves a strong focus on security. Switching to the new IT infrastructure has provided an opportunity to review and enhance protective measures against external threats, and to minimise the exposure to risk.

The new solution includes backup and data protection managed by Proact. This is conducted in a way that helps FCG achieve GDPR compliance, and addresses financial market regulations that FCG must indirectly comply with because of its client work.

While FCG has strict requirements surrounding security, the firm is also keen to adopt modern solutions that provide effective tools for mobile users and remote workers. The previous environment offered a virtual private network (VPN) setup for remote access. This was replaced by Microsoft Intune, a cloud-based solution that manages mobile users and different types of mobile devices.

This solution eliminates the need to install VPN software for each client, and FCG has also enhanced security by implementing two factor authentication for its mobile users. A new authorisation structure has been introduced to help retain control. In addition, Wi-Fi networks at the offices have been replaced, enabling secure, centralised management.

About Proact

Proact is Europe's leading independent data centre and cloud services provider. By delivering flexible, accessible and secure IT solutions and services, we help companies and authorities reduce risk and costs, whilst increasing agility, productivity and efficiency. We've completed over 5,000 successful projects around the world, have more than 3,500 customers and currently manage in excess of 100 petabytes of information in the cloud. We employ over 800 people in 15 countries across Europe and North America. Founded in 1994, our parent company, Proact IT Group AB (publ), listed on Nasdaq Stockholm in 1999 (under the symbol PACT). For further information about Proact's activities please visit us at www.proact.eu

About FCG

FCG is a consulting firm mainly targeting financial market stakeholders that are subject to financial supervisory authorities. Clients also include businesses in other industries where governance is strongly influenced by regulation. FCG has 150 employees, covering specialist areas in law, financial business, business control and risk management.

FCG is operating according to a clear expansion strategy. Since its founding in Sweden in 2008, the firm has established presence in three Nordic countries, with offices in Stockholm, Malmö, Copenhagen and Oslo.

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For FCG, the Office 365 migration is more than just a step towards the cloud. The service offers a broad range of apps, aside from Skype, which FCG already used. These additions will enable new ways of working and collaboration.

"In line with our intentions, we have experienced a shrinking volume of emails. We want to redirect communication to other channels that provide better structure and control," says Magnus Nelding.

Users outside the organisation are also benefiting from these changes. During client projects that involve external users, FCG used to rely on conventional file and folder sharing. This is no longer the case. Instead, SharePoint is being used to enable collaboration both internally and in FCG's client projects. For group chat, another Microsoft Office 365 tool is being used, called Teams.

IT infrastructure delivered as a service, through Proact Hybrid Cloud, forms the backbone of the new solution. In addition, FCG uses Software as a Service solutions from other external suppliers, including for ERP, CRM and time tracking applications. FCG has also engaged with Proact to support round-the-clock availability (24/7), including end-user support for office and mobile users underpinned by a fixed monthly fee.

FCG has retained some applications on dedicated servers that are now hosted by Proact using a traditional outsourcing model. The long-term goal is to migrate each of these to a modern, virtualised, and cloud-enabled environment.

"We appreciate that Proact keeps pushing us by suggesting various cloud solutions in order to lower our costs, even when these mean that their involvement for our IT service delivery has to be reduced," says Magnus Nelding.

The solution is complemented by financing, where FCG is leasing equipment from Proact. All hardware was replaced when migrating to the new environment. Planned additions include a self-service portal where FCG can submit requests and place orders directly with Proact. This way, new requirements from the growing organisation can be addressed and fulfilled even more efficiently.

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The Benefits



Enhanced functionality.

Operating system and productivity applications updated concurrently with systems migration.



Compliance

GDPR and financial market regulation addressed by secure IT infrastructure solution.



Business support

Proact's presence at multiple locations facilitates planned business expansion



Scalability

Solution includes hardware leasing, allowing for convenient scaling and addition of new users.