

PETHEALTH ENHANCES ITS APPLICATION RELIABILITY WITH A MANAGED HOSTING SOLUTION FROM ALLSTREAM

SUMMARY

ORGANIZATION

Pethealth Inc. is a leading provider of insurance and integrated health-related information services for North America's pet market.

INDUSTRY

Insurance

CHALLENGE

To support its leading pet-related applications, the company needed to enhance its infrastructure, bandwidth and IT talent.

SOLUTION

With Allstream's fully managed hosting solution, provided in partnership with SunGard, Pethealth gets access to the power, bandwidth, backup and service it needs to guarantee application availability for both its customers and staff.

OUTCOMES

- Doubled its size while adding only one person to its IT infrastructure team
- Enhanced application security and reliability
- Strengthened its disaster recovery with off-site hosting and access to alternate facilities in the event of an emergency
- Avoided the costs associated with maintaining its own production servers and IT team
- Migrated its Exchange server and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to the hosted environment to support roughly 200 employees across Canada, the US and the UK

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

With over 230,000 dogs and cats insured under its various programs, Pethealth Inc. is the second largest provider of major medical insurance for dogs and cats in North America. A TSX-listed company, Pethealth operates across North America and recently expanded into the UK.

Despite these considerable achievements, the company maintains a lean operating structure focused on providing its existing customers with an ever-expanding array of products and services. As part of this mandate, Pethealth decided several years ago to develop and host a series of applications geared towards pet owners and animal welfare organizations. Its only challenge? It lacked the bandwidth, guaranteed power and infrastructure flexibility it needed to ensure always-on system availability.

"Our reputation was at risk," admits Steve Zeidman, Chief Technology Officer at Pethealth.

"We were new to the market and didn't want to launch an application we couldn't support. To guarantee uptime and gain the credibility we needed, we knew we would have to migrate our servers to a hosted environment."

"In launching new customer applications, we needed to guarantee that the services would be up and running. Managed hosting was the best way to gain this assurance."

- Steve Zeidman,
Chief Technology Officer,
Pethealth Inc.

SOLUTION

In building its business case, Pethealth began by assessing its various hosting options. Although it briefly considered hosting its own environment, it quickly realized it could not justify the investment from a cost perspective.

"It would have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to properly secure our building, guarantee power, access sufficient bandwidth and maintain appropriate levels of security," Zeidman says.

"And that doesn't take into account the costs of the additional staff members we would have needed to maintain our production servers, monitor operations and ensure interoperability among our various locations."

Pethealth also considered relying on unmanaged hosting facilities, but worried about gaining access to the IT skills and resources it would

ultimately need to maintain and expand its hosted applications.

After deciding to proceed with a fully managed solution, the company turned to its trusted providers at Allstream. After several years of hosting its environment at Allstream's legacy facilities, Pethealth ultimately migrated its hosted environment to the company's new state-of-the-art facilities.

Since it first began hosting just three servers with Allstream, Pethealth has experienced exceptional growth. Today, Allstream monitors, maintains and manages three cabinets full of Pethealth equipment. Beyond its basic pet insurance systems, Pethealth relies on Allstream to manage a wide range of its customer-facing applications, including:

ABOUT PETHEALTH INC.

Since it was first founded in 1998, Pethealth has expanded considerably. In 2001, it began trading on the TSX Venture Exchange as a Tier 1 listed company, before graduating to a full TSX listing in 2007. Thanks to a series of strategic alliances, the company has extended both its geographic reach and its product portfolio. In both 2006 and 2007, Pethealth was named in the annual PROFIT 100 Ranking of Canada's Fastest Growing Companies. The company has also positioned itself for the future with a business model that combines the financial benefits of a stable and growing revenue base from the sale of pet health insurance with the potentially more significant "blue sky" opportunities generated through its web-based ASP (application service provider) .NET applications. For more information, visit www.pethealthinc.com.

"Thanks to Allstream, we can secure our building, guarantee power and gain access to IT resources that would otherwise be beyond our reach."

- Steve Zeidman,
Chief Technology Officer,
Pethealth Inc.

SOLUTION Continued

- 24PetWatch, a pet recovery database that has microchipped over 1.8 million dogs and cats since 2003
- PetPoint, a web-based animal management application used by over 1,000 animal welfare organizations in North America, and
- Petango, a real-time searchable database of pets in need of loving homes

Most recently, the company also decided to move its Microsoft Exchange server and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system into its managed environment to support its 200

staff members located in four offices throughout Canada, the US and the UK.

"Once we began hosting one application, it made obvious sense to continue moving in that direction," Zeidman explains. "Since we first started hosting with Allstream, our company has probably doubled in size but only added one person to our IT infrastructure team. Managed hosting supports our overall growth as a company by letting us add more clients and more product lines without worrying about how our infrastructure will keep pace."

BUSINESS OUTCOMES

Since migrating to Allstream's managed hosting environment, Pethealth:

- Doubled its size while adding only one person to its IT infrastructure team
- Enhanced application security and reliability
- Strengthened its disaster recovery with off-site hosting and access to alternate facilities in the event of an emergency
- Avoided the costs associated with maintaining its own production servers and IT team
- Freed up its internal IT resources to focus on application development rather than on monitoring, maintenance and management

- Gained the ability to easily and quickly add more bandwidth as it is required
- Outsourced non-core functions, such as infrastructure management, so it can remain focused on activities that enhance corporate value

"For us, one hour of downtime can result in a day of lost revenue. Our building is often subject to power outages. And we worried about attracting and retaining the IT expertise we needed to maintain our environment. With our managed hosting solution from Allstream, we never have to worry about these things," Zeidman concludes.

ABOUT ALLSTREAM

Allstream has a national, award winning IT Security Practice. Our security consultants and architects are recognized with several professional certifications such as ISO Lead Auditor, CISSP, CISA, CISM, QSA, GCIA and CIPP/C in addition to many vendor certifications. Over the years, our certified security professionals have acquired vertical industry knowledge that extends across sectors such as Government, Education, Healthcare, Public Safety, Energy, Financial Services, Manufacturing, Retail, and Telecommunications. Using industry accepted methodologies and best practices; Allstream delivers security solutions tailored to meet the needs of individual organizations.

To learn more about Allstream please visit
WWW.ALLSTREAM.COM