

Office 365 for Nonprofits

AWWA migrated its operations to the cloud with Office 365, enabling greater collaboration and improved efficiency across its centers in Singapore.

Founded in 1970, AWWA delivers a wide range of social service outreach programs to pave the way towards a more inclusive community in Singapore. The nonprofit has developed unique expertise in early intervention programs for children with special needs, special education for children with multiple and severe physical disabilities, family support for low-income families, caregivers support and enabling ageing-in-place for seniors.

The old system

In line with the Singapore government's efforts to empower people with disabilities and their caregivers, AWWA has been scaling up its support programs over the past few years. As part of its digital transformation roadmap, the nonprofit wanted to embrace tech solutions that can help improve its services and better address the needs of its 6,000 beneficiaries.

With its scope of operations expanding rapidly, AWWA felt increasingly constrained by its outdated IT infrastructure. With more than 600 full-time and temporary employees and volunteers working across 10 offices and numerous off-site locations, AWWA needed more user-friendly mobile tools to collaborate effectively from anywhere, at any time.

Solutions used:



AWWA revamped its IT infrastructure with Office 365, empowering them to:



Achieve up to 20% work efficiency improvement



Enable staff to collaborate seamlessly



Improve data security and IT maintenance



"Office 365 enabled us to overcome a few pressing technology challenges and gave our organization a great boost in terms of enhanced collaboration and work productivity, without us having to invest in expensive IT infrastructure."

- Jonathan Koh, IT Manager at AWWA

The new system

In a phased implementation started in 2015—part of a three-year plan defined by its IT committee—AWWA gradually migrated to the Office 365 platform, using a combination of donated E1 licenses and discounted E3 licenses together with Power BI Pro. AWWA worked with Microsoft partner Insight Technology Solutions to aid the integration of Office 365 across its operations, and conducted multiple staff training sessions to ensure a smooth transition and high level of user satisfaction throughout the cloud migration.

Transitioning to the cloud through Office 365, AWWA was able to:

- Boost staff productivity by giving them the tools to work remotely
- Foster stronger collaboration across different office locations
- Safeguard data security and reduce IT maintenance burden

Benefits from the new system



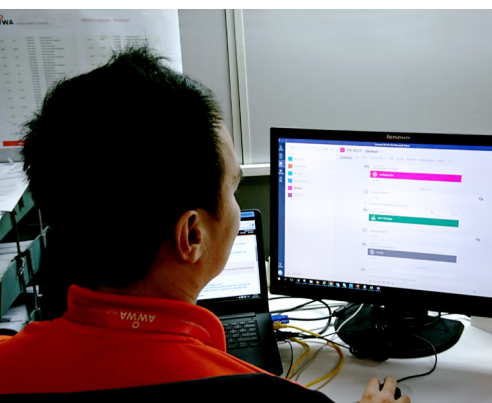
Improving work efficiency and mobility

The cloud-based Office 365 suite helped AWWA move beyond the confines of its legacy IT infrastructure and traditional work environment. AWWA staff no longer need to regularly archive emails to free up space, nor spend time communicating back and forth via emails to schedule meetings, discuss ideas, and collaborate on documents.

The new cloud capabilities further allow staff to access, update and manage their files and appointments remotely. This enables them to collaborate on documents and projects even when working at off-site locations such as schools and hospitals. Koh estimates that Office 365 has improved efficiency by up to 20 percent.

"It is now much easier to access mails, appointments and documents with Office 365. I can continue being productive even while I'm not in the office."

- Tricia Oh, Executive Assistant at AWWA.



Sparking new ways to collaborate

With file syncing via OneDrive, AWWA staff members can exchange information and knowledge and collaborate more effectively across the different offices. In addition to OneDrive, the nonprofit is currently using Microsoft Teams to facilitate seamless communications across its five AWWA Early Intervention Centres.

Therapists and staff members can share files, or brainstorm via threaded conversations for a more intuitive collaboration experience using the chat-based workspace. Employees can also readily access the data and chat history securely consolidated in Microsoft Teams for insights to enhance their support services.

Putting security and data privacy first

Data security is a top concern for the nonprofit as it handles confidential beneficiary data such as medical records and sensitive personal information. With Office 365, AWWA now enjoys the expansive backup capabilities of the cloud, without the worry of data leaks. The IT team also leverages other Office 365 security features, such as its email malware and spam filtering capabilities, and robust administrative controls over privacy settings to customize user access.

"We are confident that our data is safeguarded at all times with Office 365 and the Microsoft cloud," Koh added. "We no longer have to maintain an extensive on premise infrastructure just for backup, giving us greater flexibility to allocate our resources to best support our mission."

Unlocking new possibilities



Looking ahead, AWWA is looking at using Azure to strengthen its disaster recovery capabilities, and leveraging Power BI to gain better insights into improving their services. The nonprofit is exploring the use of Skype for Business and Microsoft Stream to facilitate organization-wide meetings and training programs in the future.

"We look forward to working closely with Microsoft to explore new areas where the cloud can help us achieve greater operational efficiencies and improve the services we deliver," Koh said.