

Law firm reimagines security and flexibility with Modern Workplace



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Wetherell



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Every year, premier Kiwi law firm Mayne Wetherell takes on up to 8 graduates and summer clerks as part of its popular recruitment programme.

But on-premise hardware and perpetually licensed software are not by their nature made for rapidly scaling services up and down. Add to the mix an ageing IT infrastructure and you've got the perfect environment for a move to cloud.

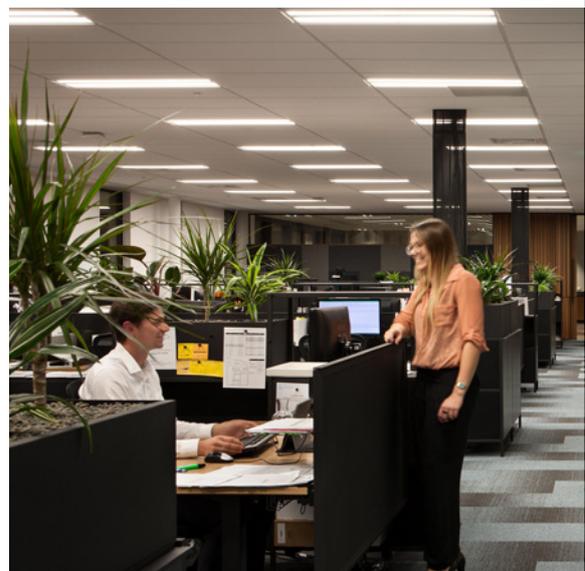
"Technology is absolutely critical for what we do," says Mayne Wetherell partner Michael Pritchard. "We spend a large portion of our time working with technology to deliver our services. Principally, that's a lot of email, a lot of word processing, teleconferences and what have you."

The firm, which has 30+ lawyers on its team, advises on some of New Zealand's most significant and complex business transactions.

It outsources its IT services to the experts, award winning IT support and solutions company, Kinetics, in a partnership stretching back seven years. Kinetics proved itself by maintaining Mayne Wetherell's IT platform for several years before increasing issues with the ageing servers and a move to new premises saw discussions turn to Azure and Office 365.

Scott Funnell, Kinetics client executive, says ongoing engagement and regular FlightPlan best practice reviews are key in Kinetics' customer engagements.

"It's important to make sure everything you're focusing on matches the businesses requirements. FlightPlan provides a helicopter view of your business from an IT perspective and helps businesses reimagine and remap



what they should be doing with IT to propel the business forward."

For Mayne Wetherell and Kinetics, the FlightPlan process, which included interviewing stakeholders, shone a light on the firm's obligations in areas including sharing and protecting data and cybersecurity, and allowed them to prioritise their activities and set IT.

For Mayne Wetherell, that cloud is a hybrid one, with several key line of business applications needing to be retained on-premise. Wherever possible services have been moved to the cloud.

Business continuity moves

"In particular we moved our email services, which are the lifeblood of what we do here, into Microsoft's hosted Office 365 solution, using Exchange Online," Pritchard says.

"It's provided us with business continuity protection and resilience that we didn't have when we were working with our on-premise servers. If they went down, emails would bounce back to the sender, which was a major pain point.

"By moving to the cloud we benefit from Microsoft's excellent uptime, and even if our on-premise servers were to go down, we can still send and receive emails and carry on our business. And with each cloud





service we utilize, it is essential that the security is the same or better than what we could achieve on-premise. From a security standpoint, there has been no trade-off."

The move to subscription-based pricing also provides Mayne Wetherell with the flexibility to scale licenses up and down when needed, including to accommodate those graduates, while spreading the total cost of ownership over the subscription period.

Gaining powerful insights

Subscription licensing and email were just the starting point in Mayne Wetherell's cloud journey.

The firm is harnessing Microsoft's Office 365 productivity suite, utilising Azure Active Directory for additional security including multifactor authentication across on-premise and cloud, and

SharePoint for its intranet and for collaborating with external clients.

"It enables us to share large files with clients and provide a better experience from the user perspective," Pritchard says of the SharePoint system. "We can send a link to a client who can download it, and we have records of who has accessed it, who downloaded it – and we can revoke the links too."

PowerBI Pro, meanwhile, enables the firm to discover real-time business insights, scraping data from on-premise legal practice software and presenting it in accessible dashboards.

"We can see how the business is performing, whether there are any bottlenecks in terms of staff utilisation so we can make changes," Pritchard says. "We're getting much better insights than we ever could before, which is extremely valuable to us."

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Mike Allan, Kinetics client technical manager, says Mayne Wetherell's adoption of PowerBI is a good example of another benefit of cloud software.

"The continual release of products and new features in Office 365 means you're not stuck with what you've got until your next refresh.

"Every couple of months a new feature is rolled out in Office 365. Applications including PowerBI, Teams and Delve have become available as part of the subscription since Mayne Wetherell moved to Office 365 and they're able to embrace these new technologies without needing to invest a lot more money or wait long periods of time to get them."

Those updates include new security features, with Pritchard noting "We're benefiting from continuously improving security and auditing capabilities that come with the ever-evolving cloud solution, as opposed to having a static on-premise instance.

"Microsoft provides us with a suite of tools that assist in safeguarding

access to our, and our clients', data while maintaining simplicity for our users."

Embracing cloud

Pritchard is blunt that given the option, Mayne Wetherell would move fully to the cloud.

"There are constantly new and improving tools coming out for the legal sector, in particular some leveraging quasi-AI based technology. Those solutions are often based in the cloud where you get the benefit of cloud computing power to scale up as needed, rather than having to have very powerful on-premise servers to run the analytics and AI technology.

"I see us going further and deeper into AI-based tools, and the cloud will play a big part in that."

He's hoping Microsoft – and Kinetics – will also play a big part in that future. "It is much preferred to get an off-the-shelf solution from a trusted provider like Microsoft than go with new companies. Security, data governance, and confidentiality

are critical to what we do, so each of our cloud-based solutions must offer best-in-class protection in those areas."

Says Allan: "Mayne Wetherell are an example of a business that engages with evolving technologies, and explores ways to maximize our technology platforms to respond to our business needs in new and creative ways."

For Mayne Wetherell, meanwhile, it's been a painless transition. "Kinetics did an excellent job in terms of managing the transition from on-premise to cloud," says Pritchard.

"One of the things we really value about their service is that they have individuals who are our point of contact for delivery of projects like this – so rather than being a faceless organisation where we get a different person every time we speak to someone, there's very much a project owner who will be with us the entire journey."

The FlightPlan meanwhile, ensured Mayne Wetherell moved to the intelligent cloud, intelligently.



FlightPlan™ provides a helicopter view of your business and in light of your goals, details the optimal IT solutions to propel your business forward.

If you would like to know more about how a Modern Workplace would benefit your business, contact the Kinetics team today.

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