

CASE STUDY

MANAGED IT SERVICES

► LAUNCH DIAGNOSTICS

Microsoft Partner



PINNACLE HELPS LAUNCH DIAGNOSTICS LTD **MOVE TO THE CLOUD** – AND CONTRIBUTE TO EUROPE’S PANDEMIC RESPONSE



CLIENT PROFILE

Launch Diagnostics Ltd is one of the UK’s leading independent distributor’s of reagents, diagnostic kits and laboratory instrumentation. Founded in 1990, the business remains privately owned and supplies the Health Services of the UK, France, Belgium, and Luxemburg; and to the Republic of Ireland through ACCUSAY Diagnostics (a division of Launch Diagnostics Ltd). Today, the business has a team of 54 staff in four countries and is a member of the British In Vitro Diagnostics Association (BIVDA).

“WE’VE USED PINNACLE EVER SINCE THE **EVOLUTION OF THE COMPANY**, AND NOW THEY’VE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN MOVING US AWAY FROM ON-PREMISE TECHNOLOGY TO HOSTED SERVICES AND OFFICE 365, WHERE WE’VE SEEN **SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS** IN TERMS OF WORKING EFFICIENCIES.”

IAN JONES

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, LAUNCH DIAGNOSTICS LTD





EVOLVING TO THE CLOUD

Pinnacle has been Launch Diagnostics' technology partner for over 20 years, advising and implementing on major strategic technology decisions and ensuring that the business has a modern and fit-for-purpose ongoing IT infrastructure.

Like many businesses, a measured and planned move to cloud services made sense for Launch Diagnostics, but the business case came from a mix of circumstances. The in-house on-premise servers were running out of space, just as (and partly because) the business was growing. The subscription model of Office 365 was economically attractive and meant that the growing team would always have the latest Office software.

Launch Diagnostics Technical Director, Ian Jones, says "We've used Pinnacle ever since the evolution of the company, and now they've been instrumental in moving us away from on-premise technology to hosted services and Office 365, where we've seen significant benefits in terms of working efficiencies. We see the advantages of a subscription-based service, where we know we'll get constant software updates. Using Teams, creating channels for particular discussion groups, allows us to really maximise our daily workload. Being able to update documents in real-time, on the fly, is a particularly big advantage for our field Sales and Technical teams. We've seen the trend to cloud across our industry – we didn't want to get left behind."

The decision was therefore made in Spring 2020 to move to the Cloud, with Office 365 with full on-site and off-site backups a priority to roll out.

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AND THEN YOU-KNOW-WHAT HAPPENED...

The cloud migration was planned across the Spring and executed by August 2020 – and has proved to be one of the best decisions the company has made.

During this time, it was, of course, forced to readjust to operating under pandemic conditions, with many staff working remotely. Cloud connectivity would allow employees to stay connected, work effectively and have constant access to the documents they need to run the business.

But Launch Diagnostics also found itself on the front line of the pandemic response. As a provider of medical diagnostic testing products to the Health Services of the United Kingdom, ROI, France and Belgium, the business has expanded dramatically due to the demand for Accurate, Precise, Sensitive and Specific COVID-19 diagnostic test kits and associated equipment that Launch were able to supply to its customers. It has had to grow in staff, activities, and distribution networks to provide support to Europe's COVID response – and the IT has had to grow to accommodate those needs, too. "We've been flat out since March", says Ian. "Staff who have not been required to work from an office environment have worked from home, but essential operational/logistic staff like warehouse, distribution, engineering and application employees who have been preparing equipment ready for installation for COVID testing have all been on-site to support the National DHSC COVID-19 testing strategy. Having the Office 365 setup has allowed our team to work wherever they need to be. I think we would have really struggled without it."



A CONNECTED WORKFORCE

Microsoft Teams has been particularly important in supporting the business, both operationally and in terms of morale. Suppliers, partners and customers were already using Teams in preference to other less versatile teleconferencing solutions, so there was a clear rationale for simplicity and consistency. But Ian says that the greater benefit has been keeping his team connected and motivated at a time of international growth alongside some isolation for individual employees.

“It has been difficult for the staff. We’ve had salespeople and other employees working from home since March 2020, so those individuals haven’t had the face-to-face relationships they’re used to. Working from home permanently is a tough ask.”

“We also couldn’t conduct sales without the technology”, he continues. “Telephone calls are okay, but it’s better to do it on Teams where we can share documents, quotations, etc. and have some face to face interaction. That’s been fundamental.”

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'TEAMS' IS ALL ABOUT THE TEAM

Rolling out a new IT infrastructure during a pandemic isn't easy. For starters, plenty of hardware had to be delivered to individual users' homes. Laptop setups and Windows updates were managed remotely to several locations rather than just the one HQ.

But these challenges were no great problem - and, in any case, not the key priority. Pinnacle's philosophy is that technology should create new value; and that relies above all on considering the users. Pinnacle has therefore invested most time into customized training sessions on Office 365 functionality (including Teams) to ensure that every user gets the most out of their new software. This has included deep-dive scoping projects for each department and train-the-trainer activities so that individuals can share best practice with their colleagues.

Today, Launch Diagnostics' IT infrastructure is scalable to meet whatever challenges the post-pandemic world can throw up. In what will undoubtedly be a hybrid system of remote and on-site working plus field crews, all staff are better connected to each other and empowered to deliver for customers. Says Ian, "Pinnacle have been with us every step of the way. They've always given us good advice. Even through the pandemic they've gone above and beyond to look after us."



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