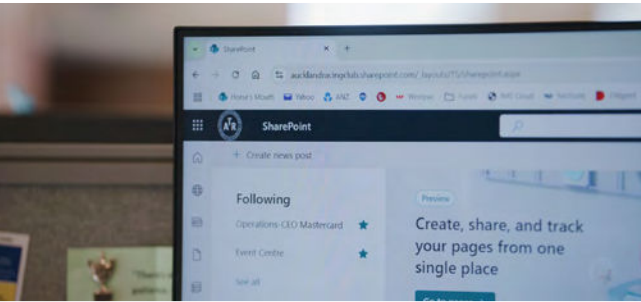


Auckland Thoroughbred Racing – honouring heritage, building for the future



AUCKLAND THOROUGHbred RACING
SINCE 1874



Success Story
Microsoft Modern Workplace

Industry
Leisure & Hospitality



300+ boxes searched in minutes

Instant access replaces manual file digging



\$60,000 saved on server upgrades

MFA added, risks closed, board reassured



\$1,000 saved every month

Cloud model reduces ongoing IT costs

Background

For more than 150 years, Auckland Thoroughbred Racing (ATR) has been at the heart of New Zealand's sporting and events scene. Best known for the Ellerslie and Pukekohe Park racecourses, the organisation's focus has expanded, with major residential developments across its extensive grounds.

This diversification has prompted this traditional organisation to adopt a more modern and efficient approach to its operations. When CFO Gareth Jones joined in 2023, he saw huge opportunities to build smarter, safer and more scalable operations.

"It's primarily a thoroughbred racing club and the second-largest events business in New Zealand. We host race meetings across two tracks, have just completed a \$55 million renovation of the Ellerslie track and have two dedicated master planning teams, one at each site... and we're building an endowment fund."

This increasing complexity meant that modernising was fast becoming a necessity – and for that, he turned to CodeBlue.

We had servers that were out of warranty and unsupported, with a six-figure project to replace and modernise them or leave us open to the risk of malicious attack.



Gareth Jones
CFO

Auckland Thoroughbred Racing

Saddled with legacy

When Gareth joined the organisation, it became immediately apparent that the IT infrastructure environment needed urgent investment - the seven-year-old server was coming to the end of its workable life. The unsupported on-premise server combined with dated processes were holding back his teams, increasing security risks and limiting workflow efficiency.

“We had servers that were out of warranty and unsupported, with a six-figure project to replace and modernise them or leave us open to the risk of malicious attack,” says Gareth.

Document management was paper-heavy and siloed, with staff finding manual workarounds. For example, staff were printing documents and storing them in ‘mountains’ of filing cabinets, or off-site in archive boxes. Retrieving important intellectual property, business documents or records meant rifling through over 300 boxes of paper.

“That would be days and days of searching for a document that might not actually be there,” Gareth explains. “So, there’s an inefficiency trying to discover those documents, or a duplication of effort if you have to replicate them.”

Team collaboration was limited to emailing attachments back and forth, which inevitably led to duplicates and multiple versions of the same file being edited in isolation. This created confusion, rework, lost changes and, of course, security risks.

“We don’t want attached documents going around on emails,” says Gareth. “They’re almost as dangerous as paper in terms of going to the wrong email address and leaking outside the building.”

As a trusted IT provider, CodeBlue recommended a full transformation – modern technology supporting modern workflows to match ATR’s future-focused ambitions.



\$0

Future server costs

Faster pacing with modern workflows

A full migration to Microsoft Modern Workplace would replace ageing infrastructure without the hefty capital investment while reducing security risks and support costs. It would also enable more modern workflows, eliminating manual workarounds, improving collaboration, and transforming document accessibility.

That would be days and days of searching for a document that might not actually be there

Gareth



CodeBlue’s Solution Architect started with a comprehensive infrastructure review and risk assessment to tailor a step-by-step implementation plan to ATR’s scale and needs. The goal was not technology for its own sake, but to support the organisation’s shift from traditional racing operations to a fast-growing, multi-stream business.

A phased, pragmatic approach to implementation minimised disruption and helped staff adapt to the new way of working. Alongside the cloud migration, CodeBlue provided on-site support and worked to connect ATR’s Microsoft platforms to its new ERP, NetSuite.

Microsoft Teams and SharePoint improved collaboration, document management, access and audit readiness, while enabling MFA and modern endpoint security layered on cyber protections.

Serverless and futureproofed

Now serverless, Gareth says the organisation has “fully embraced Microsoft Modern Workplace,” and it’s already delivering beyond his expectations.

“It’s helped us drive digitisation and modernisation of a lot of business processes.”

Transformed collaboration

Working from a single source of truth in SharePoint, teams avoid version conflicts and unnecessary duplication. It’s also brought them closer together.

“Businesses, even of a smaller size, can become siloed, but this [modern workplace tools] opens the company up and allows people to share more. You can invite people into your sacred area and give them specific access to just what they need,” says Gareth.

He points to a recent budgeting process as an example of SharePoint’s value, reducing workloads for the finance team and encouraging greater engagement and ownership from other departments.

“It allowed us to get the exec team more involved and engaged. The feedback we got was that it was probably the best budget process they’ve done.”

Days of searching in under two minutes

Those boxes of paper files are now a thing of the past. With cloud storage, searching takes minutes, not days.

“It’s instantaneous now. If you don’t find what you’re looking for and it’s not there, you can call off the search. Even with the best physical filing system in the world, if you feel it should be there and you haven’t found it, you keep going.”

Cut monthly IT costs by
\$1,000

Easier supplier and new employee management

Centralised cloud systems and consistent digital workflows have made managing both employees and suppliers significantly easier. New team members get up and running faster – devices can be set up remotely and almost automatically, with critical documents and information easily available as they settle into their new roles.

“We don’t need an engineer to spend four hours deploying that machine every time.”

Moving all suppliers to PDF invoicing has let ATR automate much of the process, reducing time spent, errors and payment timelines.

“We’re exclusively digital, so it’s seamless and they get paid the right amount at the right time.”

Security of modern cloud

Moving to the cloud also gives ATR ongoing access to regular security patches and protections to keep its systems one step ahead of the bad actors. Multi-factor authentication (MFA) and built-in redundancy have reduced threat exposure further, minimising the chance of extended downtime and business disruption.

“This keeps our Board Risk Committee happy. We’ve closed a few gaps, which is especially important in a business with significant capital flows.”

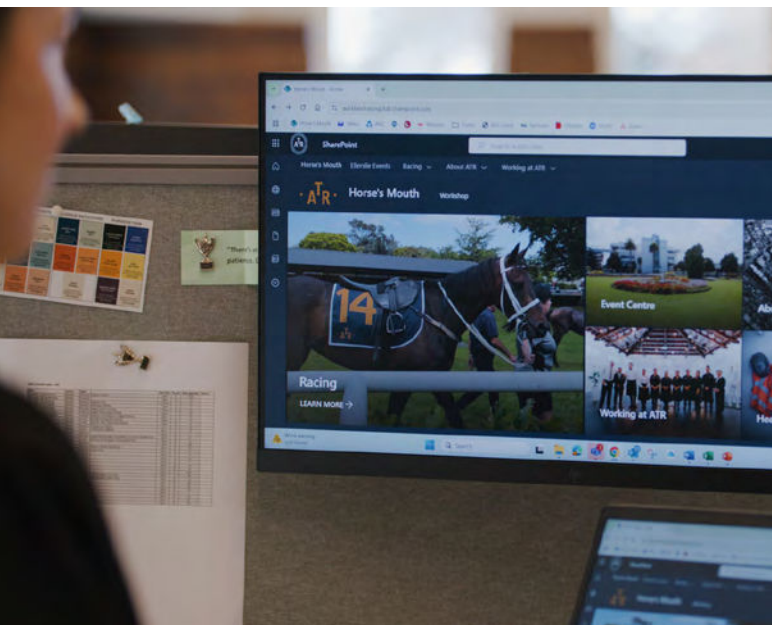
“Better than cost neutral”

While moving to the cloud was a must-do for ATR’s future sustainability, it also created cost savings. The company avoided a \$60,000 server replacement and cut monthly IT costs by \$1,000.

“It was definitely worth doing and better than cost-neutral. We’ll never have to buy physical servers again.”

Add to that the ongoing cost savings from greater efficiency, and it’s easy to see why Gareth called the move ‘a no-brainer’.

“The business is bigger with a significant growth in operations – and we’re managing to do it with that fraction less of an FTE.”



ATR unbridled

ATR's move to Microsoft Modern Workplace, led by CodeBlue, wasn't just about modernising IT – it was the start of a cultural shift, and it's already delivering measurable benefits. With greater efficiency, stronger security and a more collaborative culture, the organisation is all set for an ambitious future.

"It costs about the same to move to the cloud as it would have to buy a server, and we'll never need that capital again.

"At the same time, CodeBlue didn't just sell us a solution - they helped us rethink how we work. Their support was a key driver to digitise and modernise the business processes."

And with that, one of New Zealand's oldest organisations is ready for whatever comes next.

At the same time, CodeBlue didn't just sell us a solution - they helped us rethink how we work. Their support was a key driver to digitise and modernise the business processes.

Gareth Jones | CFO | **Auckland Thoroughbred Racing**



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