

CASE STUDY

Xterity Cloud Services enables Comfort Keepers to Deliver Quality Round-the-Clock In-home patient care

The Customer

Comfort Keepers are a non-medical homecare services provider with over 17 offices located throughout Ireland. Established in 2005 to assist families in keeping their loved ones happy and independent at home, Comfort Keepers has grown to be one of the largest providers of elder care and homecare services in Ireland. It is the only national homecare provider to have been awarded the Q Mark, ISO9001 and Healthmark accreditations for the quality of care and the systems used to support its delivery. In addition, Comfort Keepers has also been awarded the Q Mark Homecare Provider of the Year. Comfort Keepers is the only homecare provider to be externally certified and audited by so many independent external auditing bodies, giving customers and their loved ones the confidence that they will receive the highest standard of homecare and home help.

The Business Challenge

Comfort Keepers is a business where real-time access to customer data and the many geographically dispersed sites is implicit in being able to deliver quality of service. This applies across the network as well as to its in-home patients. As a result, having to rely on internal on-premises servers alone to support the business needs proved increasingly problematic.

“Prior to 2010 we had a small business model, and relying on terminal servers made the most sense for how the business was configured at the time,” said Collette Gleeson, Head of Operations, Comfort Keepers. “However, as a company operating over multiple sites, often there can be outages for a variety of local reasons unrelated to our server environment or infrastructure. That outcome over time, given our prolific growth, became untenable.”

As internal servers and information transfer regularly broke down, Gleeson began to evaluate the benefits available to them by doing business in the Cloud.

“We can’t afford downtime or to lose information because our entire business is based on being able to access customer data on demand 24/7. So the move to the cloud offered us strong positive outcomes in terms of adding a level of redundancy and uptime to our operations – complete contingency in most cases – while also serving as an added measure of security where we no longer had to print out copies of patient information,” said Gleeson. “In fact, since 2010 moving to the cloud has helped us to achieve significant growth in our business.”

The Technical Challenge

“There were several aspects of the Xterity solution that impressed me,” said Gleeson who in turn, called them out:

“We use a model where multiple databases and multiple servers interact with each other, and having them all in a single secure environment accessible over high-speed redundant connections is vital for smooth and reliable business operations. This was a core aspect that moving to the cloud would need to provide.”

She added, “Xterity Cloud Services provides us with the high-speed connectivity we require at a guaranteed transfer rate. Other cloud providers that we looked at charge for data transfer to/from the cloud, but this can work out quite expensive, especially when a lot of data is uploaded or downloaded”

Xterity was also able to provide ComfortKeepers with a Tier 1 uncontended, symmetrical connection, and their data transfer policy means it can upload and download as much data as required with no hidden additional cost.

“Xterity’s connectivity is a meshed network of multiple upstream providers over multiple redundant routes — so if one connectivity route should fail, data will automatically re-route seamlessly via another route. So redundancy is inherently built into their design.”

Xterity’s portal was especially helpful in managing cost.

“Another aspect of the Xterity Cloud Services solution that impressed me in particular was the Xterity Cloud portal,” said Gleeson. The portal allows us to self-provision cloud servers using their intuitive drag-and-drop self-provisioning portal, allowing for quick and easy deployment of cloud resources,” said Gleeson. The pricing is displayed in real time as you edit your cloud environment, adding or removing cloud resources as required. “The beauty of this pricing feature is that we know in advance what the monthly cost will be for our cloud services, making budgeting very straightforward and predictable.

Solution and Savings

As the Cloud becomes centerpiece to Comfort Keepers’ ability to continue to deliver exceptional service to its homecare patients, the company’s alignment with Xterity has become increasingly valued.

“Ultimately, our business is 24x7x365 days a year,” explained Gleeson. “If anything happens in a single location to interrupt the performance of our either our network or our ability to serve our customers, we need to be able to transfer data, in an agile fashion, to another area. We also, and this is because of the nature of our business and the uptime it requires, need to

be able to access information from anywhere — and Xterity allows us to do that, reliably and qualitatively, with cloud technology matched to the needs of the business.”

Xterity is also able to satisfy the European Union’s current Data Protection Directive when it comes to data residency. The directive includes requirements to keep the data secure, and that the data must not be exported outside the European Economic Area except to countries or organisations that have signed up to equivalent privacy protection.

“In that way, Xterity offers a lot of value-add to Comfort Keepers, especially when it comes to making sure our data is secure within their ISO27001 accredited Tier 3+ datacenters located in Ireland. So in addition to giving us peace of mind, likewise this conveys that same peace of mind to our in-home patients,” said Gleeson.

A further value-add for Comfort Keepers has been Xterity’s level of response and help desk support, when required.

“We have found the 24 hour follow-the-sun service and support available as a huge benefit to us as our window for maintenance is so narrow, which in turn enables us to do all of the maintenance and upkeep with minimum downtime,” confirmed Gleeson. “We have found the support team to be efficient and always able to get us a response.”

A Look Ahead

As Comfort Keepers continues to cultivate its base of home patients, the ability to rely on the Cloud in general and Xterity Cloud Services in particular will persist.

“We’re already planning ahead to 2016. For example, we haven’t fully utilised some of the online monitoring and reporting structures available from within the Xterity platform, but we plan to do so in line with a new database in the coming year,” said Gleeson.

She also sees both broad and nuanced parallels between Comfort Keepers’ success and its ongoing partnership with Xterity. “As our business grows, we hope our relationship with Xterity likewise grows, complete with ‘as-a-service’ solutions that parallel, support and augment that continued growth,” said Gleeson.

For more information on ComfortKeepers visit www.comfortkeepers.ie