Skyline expansion plans supported by ICT strategy

Background

Skyline Enterprises is a hugely successful New Zealand based global tourism operator, mainly known for its tranquil gondola rides and exciting luge tracks. The company has been operating in Queenstown for over 50 years, and in Rotorua for over 40 years, where other attractions include fine-dining restaurants and other thrilling experiences.

As one of New Zealand's largest tourism operators, Skyline is a leader in designing and delivering world-class, gravity fuelled visitor experiences.

Skyline continues to grow and innovate, with new attractions and sites including Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, South Korea and soon in the UK with a new site in Swansea, Wales.

The company employs around 1,000 people worldwide, with a small IT team of 13 people based in Queenstown. Skyline Enterprises IT infrastructure is powered by Microsoft Azure, Dynamics 365 and the Microsoft 365 suite.

Problem

The tourism industry drives significant seasonal changes of staff levels, and coupled with Skyline's expansion plans, it's a constant challenge to get the right balance of functionality and cost for Microsoft licensing.

As the number of employees grew, Skyline needed a flexible licensing strategy to accommodate the increased user base and ensure all staff had the features and functions they need, particularly around security with Microsoft Defender.

Skyline has a wide variety of staff roles, from back-office to activity operators, with different technology needs. Some staff are significantly more productive with add-ons like Power BI, but the complexity of licence management meant some people did not have all the tools needed to do their jobs, while others had software that was unused.

With the ongoing growth and change, ensuring everyone in the company has secure access to the software they needed is important for their success.

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Work

To address the licensing challenges, Skyline recognised a need to think strategically and collaborate across the business to understand different user needs and optimise their Microsoft licensing. That's when they reached out to Equinox IT.

Equinox IT experts worked with Skyline's business analysts to understand all the different user requirements, explore licensing options and create an economical and effective licensing strategy.

The teams worked closely to execute the plan and move users to the "right-sized" new licensing model.

Getting licensing right is always a challenge. Partnering with Equinox IT has enabled us to match Microsoft licensing precisely to our team's needs, improving both cost efficiency and productivity. Our staff now have the right tools to do their jobs securely, no matter their role or location. Equinox IT not only helped get the right licensing for our business, they worked with our IT team to make the transition easy."

Mike Zeff, General Manager ICT

Outcomes

The collaboration with Equinox IT resulted in positive outcomes for Skyline:

- **Improved productivity:** Skyline staff all around the world now have all the features they need to create innovative, exciting experiences and build meaningful connections with customers and each other.

- **Enhanced security:** Skyline has reduced their risk of cyber threats by adopting Enterprise licences and providing Microsoft Defender Advanced Security to all users across the company, regardless of their assigned Microsoft 365 licence.

- **Seamless transition:** The pre-planning and phased approach ensured that the transition from Business Premium to Enterprise licences was smooth, with minimal disruption to existing users. Equinox IT provided support to ensure a seamless changeover.

- **Optimised licensing:** Skyline can now regularly assess staff needs across different business units and quickly adjust licensing to be cost optimised and ensure feature coverage for all users based on profiles.

- **Scalability:** The new licensing framework allows Skyline to easily scale its IT infrastructure as the company continues to grow and open new sites. The IT operations team manage licences through an Equinox IT portal, allowing for easy provisioning and assignment of licences as needed.

- **Simplified compliance:** The new licensing strategy and pre-defined user profiles make it easy to ensure licences aren't under or over provisioned. Self-service portals provide detailed information about licence allocation to minimise costs without risk of non-compliance.

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