Microsoft

Microsoft 365

Azure

Office 365

Dynamics 365

SQL

Windows 10

More⌄

Sign in

ACIES CONSULTING

Consulting startup implements cloud-based solution at light speed, adds enhanced data security

May 30, 2018

Customer
Acies Consulting

Partner
TechGyan

Products and Services
Exchange Online
Microsoft 365 Business
OneDrive for Business
Power BI Pro
Project Online
SharePoint Online
Skype for Business Online

Industry
Professional Services

Organization Size
Small (1 - 49 employees)

Country
India

Share this story

Microsoft

© 201   oso

Acies Consulting, a startup based in Mumbai, India, needed an IT solution that was quick to implement and would offer greater security features to help safeguard its customers' sensitive financial information. Acies deployed Microsoft 365 and not only delivered enhanced security but also launched operations immediately with familiar programs like Microsoft Word, Excel, and SharePoint Online. Acies quickly scaled with business intelligence tools and cloud-based services, all with minimal upfront investment.

" We were able to get off and running immediately with Microsoft 365. From the time we decided to procure to the point where we were able to deploy was at most two weeks. By the first week of January, we were approaching the market as if we weren't a startup anymore. "

—Muzammil Patel: Managing Director
   Acies Consulting

Once a startup company has cleared the first hurdle of establishing itself as a new entity, it faces an even greater challenge: actually beginning operations. For Acies Consulting, a financial consulting startup based in Mumbai, India, that was launched in November 2017, speed was of the essence if the firm was to offer its customers advice on how to thrive in today's fast-moving markets. But the sensitive nature of the customers' data also demanded a solution where security was paramount, and the

newly formed company needed to keep a keen eye on its bottom line as well.

Speed, security, and sophistication

Acies, now with more than 40 employees, began as a group of consultants who had previously been at a larger firm. For their customers, continuity of service was key. But Acies wanted to up the ante.

"We started off helping our customers deliver the objectives we were working with them on earlier, but doing it with a lot more technology—things that they already have," says Muzammil Patel, Managing Director at the firm.

Acies provides financial consulting to clients in the oil and gas and power industries, in addition to the banking and insurance sector. The firms are all heavily regulated and, therefore, highly sensitive to data security.

To better support its customers, Acies chose to transition to Microsoft 365 cloud-based services. With Microsoft 365, Acies could quickly align to preconfigured industry standards. Datacenters can remain at the customers' locations, which is critically important for firms that must operate under regulatory constraints. Acies installed BitLocker encryption on employee laptops and uses Microsoft Intune to provide an advanced layer of security. Features like Multi-Factor Authentication (a feature of Microsoft Azure Active Directory Basic that comes bundled with Microsoft 365), remote wiping of lost or stolen devices, and the ability to control most security procedures through a central console help the company manage a variety of mobile devices.

Because Microsoft 365 is not hosted on-premises, Acies quickly deployed the solution, keeping its IT overhead costs in check. Acies employees were already familiar with Microsoft Office products like Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, so onboarding time was minimal and operations could begin almost immediately. The company incorporated other Microsoft elements to schedule

resources, track timesheets, generate invoices, and view project milestones and metrics. Processes were further refined and customized with SharePoint, Microsoft Project Online, and Microsoft Flow, which Acies uses to enhance client management, project management, employee time management, and business performance review processes.

Collaboration and communication

With an office in Mumbai that serves the Indian Ocean region, the Middle East, and a Singapore office focusing on the Asia-Pacific region, Acies has considerable geographic reach, and it plans to keep growing.

"Mobility is critical for our business because just about everyone is traveling. At any given point in time, we will have people in at least four or five different countries, and across time zones. For us, our business won't work if people cannot communicate on the go," says Viraj Shah, Executive Director—Business Solutions at Acies.

In addition to holding conference calls over Skype for Business, which has cut the cost of online meeting communications to zero, Acies uses the Microsoft Teams chat-based workspace to bridge geographic gaps, and employees rely on Exchange Online to access emails securely on the go. With OneDrive for Business and SharePoint, Acies consultants can share collateral or access documents simultaneously, all without the need for costly and time-consuming travel.

Advantages for customers

In addition to traditional financial consulting offerings like risk management and accounting advisory, Acies provides customers with financial and market intelligence, as well as the technological and analytical solutions to act on it. The data-visualization capabilities of Microsoft Power BI have helped the company focus on performance management and become an extremely data-

driven organization. Performance metrics on sales, project delivery status, business pipeline, business and project leader performance, receivables, and expense management are all hosted on SharePoint and viewed using Power BI. Acies consultants can access and interpret the data quickly through easy-to-use dashboards. "It was important for us to get the dashboards up and running quickly so our consultants could start seeing the numbers and understand exactly where the business is, as opposed to having to collate it out of some accounting system," says Patel.

Power BI serves as a repository of the company's reviews, executive committee meetings, and discussions with employees and business leaders. "With Power BI, we can give our customers the same results that we have experienced with our own business," says Patel. "We help them visualize the business performance–related metrics of their outcomes."

Acies also builds its customer-related workflows on SharePoint, which ensures optimum support through improved project management and on-demand access to critical information. Customer-related workflows show the entire project lifecycle, including client onboarding, project setup, milestone tracking, management of risks, assignment and tracking of tasks, customer billing milestones, and more. In the future, the company plans to develop applications on SharePoint that can be accessed directly by its customers.

Swift and scalable

Acies Consulting now boasts impressive technology offerings, but how fast did they really take shape? The firm opened in November 2017, and its office and IT infrastructure were in place by mid-December. "We were able to get off and running immediately with Microsoft 365," says Patel. "From the time we decided to procure to the point where we were able to deploy was at most two weeks. By the first week of January, we were approaching the market as if we weren't a startup anymore."

The IT deployments are all backed by an annual managed services agreement with TechGyan, a local Microsoft Partner with Gold competencies. TechGyan provides workplace solutions for communication, collaboration, and security, as well as hybrid infrastructure solutions for backup and disaster recovery. The service will cover everything from a simple password reset to something larger like obtaining a new software license.

Going forward, Acies has designed its processes to be functional and effective regardless of how large the company grows. "We'll be able to continue to use the same processes without changing them," says Patel.

Another element that will not change is the company's dedication to its employees. The swift deployment of a state-of-the-art IT infrastructure not only allowed Acies to launch its operations at light speed but also provides the data transparency it will need to support both its employees and customers in the future.

Says Patel, "Our value system makes sure that the shared success of the organization is shared with all of the employees."

Find out more about Acies Consulting (http://www.acies.consulting/) on LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com/company/aciesconsulting) .

" Mobility is critical for our business because just about everyone is traveling. At any given point in time, we will have people in at least four or five different countries, and across time zones. For us, our business won't work if people cannot communicate on the go. "

—Viraj Shah: Executive Director—Business Solutions
  Acies Consulting

" With Power BI, we can give our customers the same results that we have experienced with our own business. We help them visualize the business performance–related metrics of their outcomes. "

—Muzammil Patel: Managing Director
  Acies Consulting

Learn More

Microsoft 365 Business

Similar Stories

Global leader in water parks chooses Project Online to increase collaboration and drive digital transformation

TalkTalk Telecom transforms work culture with Microsoft 365 to encourage creativity and collaboration

Microsoft

Health service innovator revolutionizes diagnostic procedure with data-driven agile process mapping

株式会社カラー

Follow Microsoft

What's new

Surface Book 2

Surface Pro

Xbox One X

Xbox One S

VR & mixed reality

Windows 10 apps

Office apps

Store & Support

Account profile

Download Center

Sales & support

Returns

Order tracking

Store locations

Support

Buy online, pick up in store

Education

Microsoft in education

Office for students

Office 365 for schools

Deals for students & parents

Microsoft Azure in education

Enterprise

Microsoft Azure

Enterprise

Data platform

Find a solutions provider

Microsoft partner resources

Microsoft AppSource

Manufacturing & resources

Financial services

Developer

Microsoft Visual Studio

Windows Dev Center

Developer Network

TechNet

Microsoft Virtual Academy

Microsoft developer program

Channel 9

Office Dev Center

Company

Careers

About Microsoft

Company news

Privacy at Microsoft

Investors

Diversity and inclusion

Accessibility

Security

English (United States)

Microsoft