THRIVE

CAOT Modernizes Operations with a Cloud-Based IT Strategy

CAOT · ACE

Vertical

- Healthcare

Services

- End User Support
- Managed Infrastructure
- Microsoft 365
- Security

"Ultimately, it comes down to access to resources. Having that dedicated bench strength, having someone I can call when I'm stuck—it's made all the difference."

Randy St. Louis
Senior Manager of Membership, Business Development & Information Technology

Empowering a National Mission

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) serves as the national voice for more than 11,000 occupational therapists across Canada. Though their team is relatively small with 35 staff members, CAOT has a big mission: to support and advance the practice of occupational therapy nationwide. Headquartered in Ottawa with team members distributed from coast to coast, CAOT is representative of a growing number of associations facing the need for digital transformation in a hybrid and increasingly remote world.

For years, CAOT relied on a traditional hosted server infrastructure to support its operations, but with the pandemic accelerating remote work and new technologies offering more cost-effective and flexible alternatives, the organization decided it was time to evolve. That's when they turned to their trusted managed service provider (MSP), Thrive, for guidance and support in making a major change: a full migration to SharePoint and Microsoft's cloud environment.

Building a Roadmap to the Cloud

"We actually built our IT roadmap internally," explained Randy St. Louis, Senior Manager of Membership, Business Development & Information Technology at CAOT. "We knew we wanted to move to the cloud to support our transition to a fully remote office and reduce reliance on VPN access and physical infrastructure." The team recognized that maintaining a hosted server was no longer cost-effective—especially when they were already paying for Microsoft 365 licenses that came with ample storage and collaboration tools.

Once CAOT had outlined its priorities, they engaged their MSP to help bring the vision to life. Thrive didn't just execute—they enhanced the plan with expert insight, project coordination, and dedicated technical resources. "We went to them and said, here's what we want to do. And they helped us figure out the 'how,' including the budget and timeline," St. Louis shared.

Seamless SharePoint Migration: "It Couldn't Have Gone Any Better"

The SharePoint migration marked a major shift in how CAOT's staff accessed and collaborated on documents. Gone were the days of VPN frustrations and slow access to shared drives. In their place were cloud-based file sharing, integrated workflows, and simplified, real-time collaboration.

"The process couldn't have gone any better from a project management perspective," Randy noted. "We had a dedicated project team that was extremely responsive. If one engineer didn't have an answer, they could pull in another expert immediately. That kind of bench strength is something we wouldn't have had with a smaller, local provider."

Support didn't end when the migration was complete. Months later, CAOT still relies on key contacts from the Thrive team. "I reached out to them just last week with a SharePoint question, and they got back to me with a solution within half an hour. That kind of access is invaluable."

Training, Adoption, and Cultural Change

Migrating technology is one thing—getting people to use it effectively is another. Recognizing that the new environment would be a major shift for staff, CAOT prioritized user training. "People were used to saving files on a drive and attaching them to emails. Now everything's in the cloud, autosaving, and easily shared, it's a big adjustment."

To support adoption, Thrive provided a trainer who delivered several training sessions to CAOT's staff. This hands-on approach helped ease the learning curve and equipped staff to make the most of the tools available. As CAOT continues to move forward with its roadmap, training remains a top priority.

Tangible Impact: Reduced Costs and Fewer Tickets

Moving to SharePoint has already delivered measurable benefits. Beyond eliminating the $8-9,000 CAD annual server maintenance costs, the organization has seen a noticeable reduction in support tickets.

"After the migration, we saw a significant drop in tickets. Some of that is the luck of the draw, but overall, I'd say we've cut down on tickets by over 50%. And that number is only going to improve once we complete our Active Directory migration."

From a financial perspective, the organization expects the SharePoint migration to pay for itself within two years. A similar return on investment is anticipated for the Active Directory project currently underway. "We're spending more upfront, but over three years, our total IT costs will actually be lower than if we'd kept our old setup." Thrive's flexibility in spreading the project cost over monthly payments helps to make these modernization projects a reality for CAOT.

Choosing Service Over Shortcuts

As part of its due diligence, CAOT explored options with other local MSPs—both when their previous contract expired and again after committing to the SharePoint migration. To make sure they are effectively using their budget, they review suppliers at each contract renewal. While some alternatives offered slightly lower costs, they couldn't match Thrive's depth of resources or structured support model.

"The deciding factor wasn't price. It was the project experience. The SharePoint migration went so smoothly, and we had such strong support throughout, that it made the decision to stick with Thrive easy."

That level of service, according to CAOT, is worth the trade-off of not always having a familiar voice on the other end of the support line. "Yes, you sometimes get someone new when you call. But we've never had an issue getting the help we need," said St. Louis.

Final Word

When asked why CAOT renewed their partnership with Thrive, the answer was simple: "It came down to the project experience. We were on the fence, but the support we received, especially from the project team, made it clear that sticking with them was the right call."

As a national organization supporting thousands of professionals, CAOT understands the value of collaboration, care, and commitment. With a strategic IT partner by their side, they're well-positioned to keep delivering on that mission, securely and efficiently, in the cloud.

About Thrive

Thrive delivers global technology outsourcing for cybersecurity, Cloud, networking, and other complex IT requirements. Thrive's NextGen platform enables customers to increase business efficiencies through standardisation, scalability, and automation, delivering oversized technology returns on investment (ROI). They accomplish this with advisory services, vCISO, vCIO, consulting, project implementation, solution architects, and a best-in-class subscription-based technology platform. Thrive delivers exceptional high-touch service through its POD approach of subject matter experts and global 24x7x365 SOC, NOC, and centralised services teams. Learn more at **www.thrivenextgen.com** or follow us on **LinkedIn**.