



ELIVE CASE STUDY

# How Microsoft 365 powers New Zealand's leading technology provider.

As a business which provides information technology solutions to customers across New Zealand, Auckland-headquartered Elive has enjoyed front seat access to developments in the Microsoft ecosystem. The company has tracked the introduction of Teams within the Office 365 suite, subsequently adding integrated voice calling, and now relies on the complete Microsoft 365 suite as an integral component of all its business activities.

Founded in 2004, Elive supplies a nationwide network of clients with over 180,000 registered users and over a quarter of a million purchase orders. Through partnerships with leading technology distributors and vendors, Elive supports its customers across procurement, managed services, professional services, ISP Services, Security, and VoIP. Elive covers multiple I.T. avenues and offers an end to end solution for commercial, education and government clients.

## Growing with Microsoft

While Elive started as an online retailer, the company has expanded into the provision of managed services and support for the technology solutions it provides to satisfied customers around Auckland and broader New Zealand.

Chief Technology Officer Travis Beazley-Tran says that it was with this expansion that the true power of Microsoft 365 first became apparent. "We moved to Office 365 soon after its first introduction and then with the introduction of the Services division our team not only expanded, but also started to include people working from home or just requiring more flexibility," he recalls.

In due course, Elive sought a collaboration solution and was looking at some alternatives. "Just then, Microsoft brought out Teams; being an existing Office 365 and Skype for Business user, the timing couldn't have been better. We moved onto Teams and ran that in parallel with Skype, until Skype was discontinued, and we put everything into Teams."

### BEAZLEY-TRAN

As an early adopter, Elive has enjoyed the advantage of developing its processes and practices in line with Teams.

That's really given us the ability to fully understand and expose the value of Teams, particularly as it relates to the entire Microsoft 365 solution set. We've run chat, file sharing, document creation and collaboration, meetings and more, using nothing but M365. We rely on M365 for our daily operation, and we can do so with confidence.

### Voice: The missing link

Until recently, the only essential service absent from Elive's Microsoft stack was the phone system. "We had a traditional VoIP system with local IP phones. That was OK, but not great, as the phones would stay on desks rather than move around with people," explains Beazley-Tran.

However, with the introduction of Direct Routing for Microsoft Teams, Elive was immediately interested. "When these services first became available, we started with some testing and evaluation as it held promise for the business," he confirms.

Then, of course, the COVID-19 lockdown hit. "We'd already done the R&D, so we decided to just do it. Amazingly, it worked perfectly from day one, with a few configuration points rolling it out to all 18 of our staff members. Nobody needed to take their phones with, and yet everyone – from Whangarei in the North through to the Coromandel in the East, and even to support staff in the Philippines, was instantly available just as if they were next door."







### Lasting benefits

The benefits of voice integrated into Teams aren't restricted to lockdown scenarios, either. Beazley-Tran says ditching traditional PBXs or even outdated VoIP systems – which can come with a management overhead and usability challenges – delivers cost, efficiency and performance advantages.

These include a reduction in the total cost of telephony, as devices disappear and only a headset is required, connected either to the user's computer or mobile phone.

Landlines, already on their last legs, are consigned to history with WiFi or mobile wireless data networks carrying the signal. If the company grows, adding new users is as simple as equipping them with their Microsoft 365 applications.

And Teams-integrated voice behaves just like a corporate PBX, offering features such as hold music, call park, voicemail, collaborative calling (group call pickup, delegation, and shared line appearance), Auto Attendants and call queue routing.

**/** Our experiences with voice in Teams has been so positive that we're actively marketing it to our customers. There's immediate demand, too, as having been through lockdown, every business recognises the value of complete portability of all applications, including voice.

**BEAZLEY-TRAN**



## One Microsoft for everything

The appeal of Microsoft 365 goes beyond the applications so essential to Elive's daily business and extends to supporting services. "It includes comprehensive security and device management. It includes Active Directory in the cloud. We can image computers through the cloud. We can deploy and manage policies and computers with ease. Not only do we get advanced replication and redundancy that no one can achieve with on premise infrastructure, we also get more functionality without needing any on-premise infrastructure at all. There's no need to deploy, manage, and maintain servers. And with a monthly operational bill, we always know exactly what our IT services cost," says Beazley-Tran.

As a company which takes a firm 'practice what we preach' approach, he says the proven advantages of Microsoft 365 as used within Elive makes it easy to advocate within its extensive customer base. "We're seeing renewed interest for complete cloud infrastructure post-lockdown, and Microsoft 365 is probably the best place for any organisation to start."

While the time and cost involved for any specific deployment will vary, Beazley-Tran says transformation from on premise to cloud with Microsoft 365 including Teams complete with voice, doesn't take long. "It's quite remarkable for most businesses. Depending on the complexity of your network and file structures, you can be digitally enabled within days."

With extensive experience in deploying Microsoft 365, Elive has a proven approach and methodology which focuses on rapid time to value.

**We do this every day and that means we know how to plan and deliver. That also means creating your Microsoft 365 environment costs less both in hours and in money.** // // // // //

