



PREMIA SOLUTIONS



Location

United Kingdom

Industry

Insurance

Website

www.premiasolutions.com

Solution

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)
Private Cloud Backup

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Premia Solutions offers a wide range of bespoke white label insurance products for over 2000 car dealerships throughout the UK and Ireland. Founded in 2000, the company has helped pioneer the sale of added-value car protection insurance products in the industry. It offers products aimed at the new & used car and leasing markets, such as GAP insurance, Tyre and Alloy Insurance, and policies to ensure that bodywork and interiors are protected from any potential damages.

Headquartered in Warwick, the company has grown impressively over the past two decades, increasing employee headcount by 2150%, going from four employees when it first started to over 90 employees in 2021. The team at Premia manages an expanding number of concurrent policies, which has recently risen to over one million and must activate and manage as many as 350,000 new policies in a calendar year. As opposed to total-loss policies, which cover the whole car, there is also a high frequency of claims for the minor damage the company specializes in covering, and it can find itself dealing with up to 7000 claims per month.



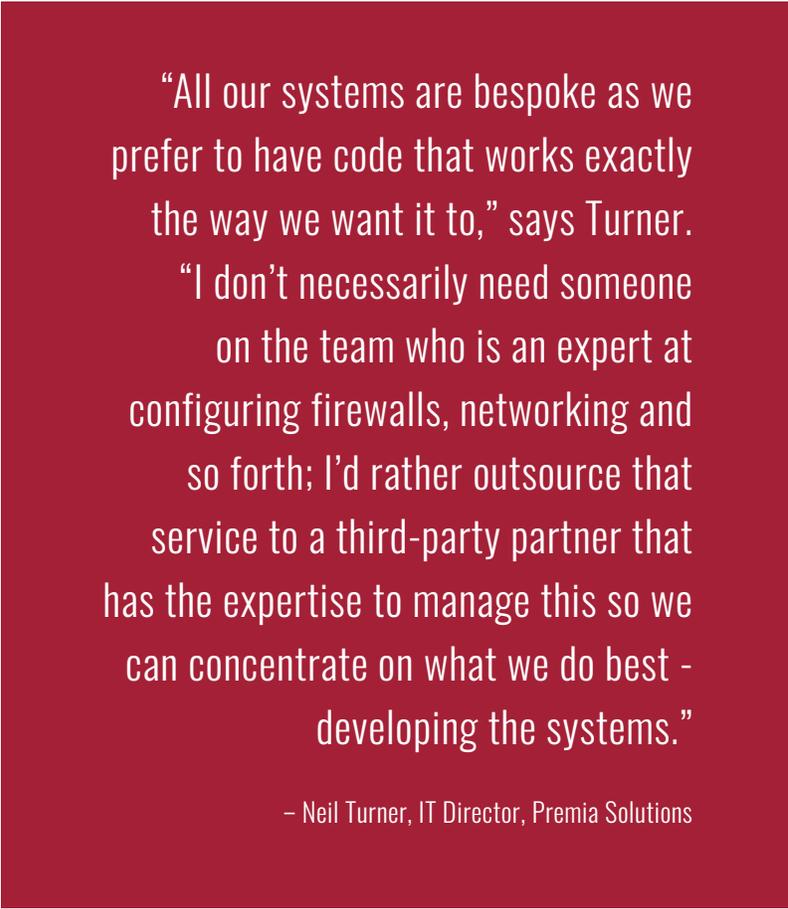
BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Premia Solutions is a medium-sized company with a compact team of seven dedicated and experienced IT professionals. This team is responsible for ensuring always-on operations and the management and security of large data throughput. IT Director at Premia Solutions, Neil Turner, originally joined the organization as a contractor back in 2003. He was responsible for developing its systems, processes, and IT environment to support business growth. As the company expanded, Neil has become instrumental in helping to grow the company significantly in line with its expansion.

As part of its customer service, the organization guarantees service levels that fit customers' ever-evolving needs. Premia offers 99.9% Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to its network of clients, who need constant access to its systems and reassurance of limited downtime. Many of its more prominent clients sell new insurance premiums during the day and then batch upload them to Premia in the early hours of the morning. Additionally, the company is pivoting towards allowing customers to manage their policies via a web portal, making always-on operations critical to future success.

"All our systems are bespoke as we prefer to have code that works exactly the way we want it to," says Turner. "I don't necessarily need someone on the team who is an expert at configuring firewalls, networking and so forth; I'd rather outsource that service to a third-party partner that has the expertise to manage this so we can concentrate on what we do best - developing the systems."

Paul Jeram, Sales Manager, Aptum comments: "During our long-standing relationship with Premia, we have designed and developed a bespoke set of solutions with its business objectives in mind. From assessing the immediate needs of the business, as it entered a period of rapid growth, to more recently building out an agile and scalable IT environment to support growing customer demands, Aptum and Premia worked together to build a solution to drive business success."



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- Neil Turner, IT Director, Premia Solutions

SOLUTION

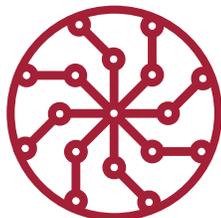
Premia Solutions has been an Aptum customer since 2012. Premia first contacted Aptum due to its well-known excellence in customer service and proven expertise in managing and delivering IT infrastructure from its data centre locations in the UK. As a result, the initial contract saw Premia moving from a basic hosting solution to a fully-fledged managed service.

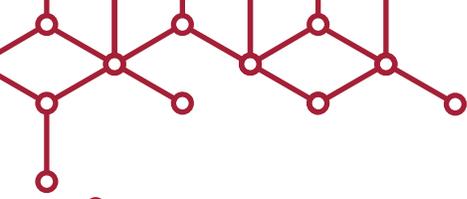
Aptum and Premia first began working together to design a solution that would take Premia from basic-hosting solutions to a fully managed service to support the business expansion and drive organisational agility and scale.

"We moved immediately to a solution where we could separate the database and the load-balanced servers. This gave us the space to grow as our business was expanding, and enabled us to concentrate on selling policies, servicing those policies, and accounting for them with somebody else being responsible for actually making sure that the system was up and running and performing the way it should," Turner says.

INFRASTRUCTURE AS A SERVICE (IAAS)

As fast as you want it to be. As reliable as you need it to be. A broad spectrum of managed services, storage, databases, commerce, and business applications. Back by Aptum's 24/7 expert support.





PRIVATE CLOUD

Experience the freedom to choose your business cloud. Easily deploy custom computing environments for application development and data delivery. Usage and capacity-based pricing, complemented by our advisory technical architecture consulting and post-deployment support.



The current solution sees Premia utilise IaaS from Aptum’s Portsmouth-based data centre. Two managed VM hosts run the web service, while a SQL server hosts the close to 100 databases the company operates. The Aptum team manages the hardware, networking, OS control, patches, backups, and disaster recovery.

The system deployed for Premia is now on its third iteration, in line with the business expansion and evolution over the past nine years. Each upgrade has been carefully planned and executed over several weeks. The result is that a recent migration to a new database server, for instance, was accomplished with only approximately four hours of downtime, which meant that there was minimal impact on their customers.

Furthermore, the redundancy built into the solution means that even when things have gone awry — such as uncharacteristically with a recent server transition during Premia’s busiest period for almost two years — the secondary equipment has been able to handle the load with ease.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Given the importance of its 24/7 service to its clients, Disaster Recovery (DR) is becoming an increasingly important part of the overall solution provided by Aptum. Premia’s data is currently backed up to Portsmouth and then duplicated to another data centre in Croydon. In addition to this, a new SQL server is also coming online at Aptum’s Heathrow facilities as the system further iterates to accommodate the company’s ambitions.

“That is partly our reporting server, but also partly our DR solution,” explains Turner. “So, we’ve got log-shipping going up to that every 15 minutes. The next part of the solution is putting in place web servers at Heathrow. That means that if something Force majeure happens to the

Portsmouth data centre, we will be able to flick a switch, and the system will come back up and be running from Heathrow.”

The flexibility of IaaS enabled Premia to respond to a significant disruptive event, too, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Premia moved Turner’s development team to home working just before lockdown mandates hit in 2020. A development system server was left in the company’s High Wycombe office, and the team connected to that over the following six months. They then got the help of Aptum to move that development server down into the Portsmouth data centre, which now sits in the colocation racking.

“We’ve got desktops now at home that allow the team to automatically connect to the development server in Aptum’s data centre. So, rather than our team being High Wycombe-based, we’re now based in various parts of the country.”

This has given the company more flexibility with recruitment and enables it to select from a wider pool of prospective employees to create a distributed team spread across the country. “We just wouldn’t have ever been able to recruit these people had we just been working out of the office in High Wycombe.”

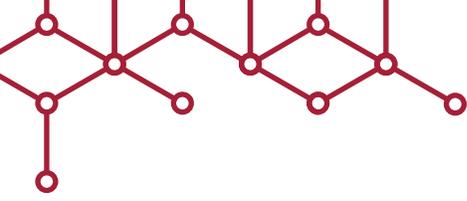
Turner sees this model persisting in the post-Covid era, too, with a new hybrid workflow enabled by Aptum’s IaaS, accommodating a flexible mix of home- and office-based working throughout the organization.

Premia Solutions has already grown impressively in recent years. By leveraging Aptum’s managed services, Premia not only has access to increased and secure locational flexibility, but it retains the ability to scale quickly in the future to accommodate future growth while maintaining 24/7 service. And that is something the 7000 customers whose claims are processed by the company every month can only benefit from.

BACKUP

Aptum’s managed backup solutions are designed to meet your unique business continuity needs. Our knowledgeable experts protect your data by leveraging best-fit technologies such as SolidFire SAN, Tivoli and Veeam, or public cloud services like Amazon and Azure to replicate your data in the cloud.





WHY NOT PUT APTUM TO WORK FOR YOU?

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ABOUT APTUM

Aptum is a hybrid multi-cloud managed service provider delivering complex and high-performance cloud solutions with an integrated secure network. Using its Data As Infrastructure™ approach, Aptum solves complex technology challenges with total solutions and tailored options that drive tangible business outcomes and maximize the value of its clients' technology investments. Aptum's cloud and global network solutions, underpinned with expert managed and professional services, offer genuine choice and adaptability with international reach spanning North America, Latin America, Europe and the United Kingdom. Aptum is a portfolio company of DigitalBridge, a global investment firm dedicated to strategic opportunities in digital infrastructure. For more information, visit www.aptum.com.

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