

Leveraging the Power of Azure Cloud to Deliver Greater 'Customer Delight'

CustomersFirst Now (CFN) is working towards creating 'delighted customers' by providing end-to-end business solutions through best-in-class software, expertise, and analytics, while adhering to Customer Experience Best Practices to help companies improve their financial performance. CFN, after using third-party tools to collect and collate data and create 'Journey Maps' for their customers, concluded that existing tools were not up to the task. Hence, CFN decided to develop their own in-house software solution. The question was, where would they host it? On premise, would mean a heavy initial infrastructural investment. The geographic distribution of CFN's teams also makes it difficult to track business operations and manage progress. That is when CFN decided to go to the cloud platform. With the help of GAVS, they adopted Microsoft Azure. The following are the details to help us understand more.

Company: CUSTOMERSFIRST NOW

Website: <http://customersfirstnow.com/>

Company Size: Start up 25-50 employees

Country or Region: USA, Canada, India

Company Profile:

CustomersFirst Now (CFN) is a Customer Delight company created on the principle that all companies must place customers at the center of their business in order to be successful both operationally and financially. CFN is designed to do exactly what the company name describes - help companies place customers first – and do so now with a sense of urgency.

Partner Profile

GAVS Technologies (GAVS) is a global IT services & solutions provider enabling digital transformation through automation-led IT infrastructure solutions. Our offerings are powered by Smart Machines, DevOps & Predictive Analytics and aligned to improve user experience by 10X and reduce resource utilization by 40%. GAVS has been recognized as a Cool Vendor by Gartner in 'Cool Vendors in ITSM 2.0, 2016' and positioned as an 'Aspirant' in Everest Group PEAK Matrix™ for Healthcare Provider IT Services. GAVS was also rated as a prominent India-based Remote Infrastructure Management player & one of the key small players serving the mid-market & enterprise clients in North America by Gartner.

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www.microsoft.com/casestudies

Business Needs

Customer satisfaction is a vital component of every organization as it provides a metric that can be used to manage and advance business relationships. Realizing the profound impact of a top-notch customer experience, some industry veterans collaborated in 2014 to create CustomersFirst Now (CFN). With a roadmap to help businesses place customers first in their business approach, CFN, set about to provide enterprises the ability to understand what matters most to their customers and drive actions to improve the full customer experience and drive financial results. Aided by best-in-class experts, tools, analytics, and frameworks, CFN works closely with enterprises to drive Customer Experience best practices in the key disciplines such as colleague engagement, operational excellence, customer engagement,

and behavioural excellence. Instrumentally, analytics plays the central role in CFN's current and future approach.

It is needless to emphasise the importance of data gathering and collation in the field of analytics. To collect and collate data and develop customer centric processes, CFN used a third-party software. But the software lacked the basic features to meet business requirements and was demanding huge expenditure. Analytics-driven data was also missing, which prevented measurable inputs and possible customisations to allow CFN to predict customer sentiments.

These limitations necessitated setting up an in-house tool which will help incorporate analytics to predict client sentiments. However, developing the new tool came with its own set of challenges – it was required to be scalable to meet

rising usage levels and yet be cost effective. In the absence of any data centre, lack of flexibility and apprehensions about investing into a new one, CFN decided to approach GAVS to suggest a collaborative platform.

“CFN was building a niche customer satisfaction and customer delight platform, which could impact financials and customer acquisition models. There were multiple teams working on this from across multiple cities. Their time to market was very aggressive and the budget was tight and hence they needed the development ‘environment as a service’. This is when they reached out to us,” says Balaji Uppili – Chief Delivery Officer, GAVS.

Solution

With all the business needs and challenges in question, GAVS stepped in to analyze the business situation faced by CFN and concluded that if CFN wants to successfully predict end-user sentiments, effectively collaborate business operations across various locations, and keep the financial investments under control, the necessary infrastructure for the new tool must be setup on a cloud platform. This cloud platform must be flexible enough to scale up as per usage requirements and allow great value for money for the new tool.

Microsoft Azure was selected for hosting the new tool based on

various key features that Azure offered.

With Azure, there was no long-term hardware investment, the team could experiment with various tools and configurations, to identify the best solutions for the product. The fact that Azure offers accessibility across multiple locations exponentially increased mobility and now developers can travel to any customer location and work closely with customer stakeholders.

The most striking feature, however, was Azure’s adaptability and integration with other Microsoft products – like Visual Studio Online, Active Directory, Office 365 – enabling the teams to develop, integrate, build and deploy their code with ease. Azure also gave CFN high scalability to meet the increased users, touch points, and parameters used for analysis.

The availability of a free tier on most of the Azure products helped the team to perform PoC and evaluate an architectural decision before having to invest on the solution itself.

“We provided CFN with a pilot model to do the complete ‘environment as a service’, whereby they didn’t have to worry about the infrastructure and could have a version up and running in no time. Then we helped them translate that pilot into mainstream work. After which, the same platform, on Azure, was rolled into production. The

benefits for CFN were faster time to market, zero upfront capex cost and on demand service,” says Balaji Uppili - Chief Delivery Officer, GAVS.

Benefits

Once CFN developed the new tool using Microsoft Azure as the cloud platform, real time and effective collaborative development and implementation across teams and locations was made possible in no time. This is because, teams could now be distributed and yet work from the same environment.

CFN can now develop robust, complex, and analytics-driven ‘Journey Maps’ with reduced development cost. The new tool now had the ability to scale up or down based on usage. The aggressive time to market was also taken care of.

Since everything could now be stored on the cloud service, there were no more overhead infrastructure management services needed, nor any long-term commitments for procuring hardware. This directly means reduction in license costs.