11:11 SYSTEMS

All aboard! Greater Anglia embarks on cloud journey with iland, now 11:11 Systems, Secure Cloud Backup for Veeam.

SOLUTION: BaaS, 365
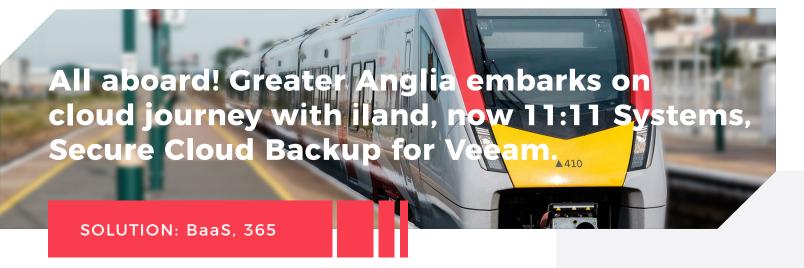
Client Profile

Greater Anglia is a major train operating company (TOC) in Great Britain offering commuter and intercity services at 133 stations across the region. Greater Anglia's rail network ranges from its Central London terminus, Liverpool Street station, to Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, parts of Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire and throughout the East of England. The company is deeply committed to a high level of environmental performance as well as quality train service that is safe, clean, punctual and reliable.

In 2021, Greater Anglia was named "Train Operator of the Year" at the Rail Business Awards for the second consecutive time thanks to record levels of improvement in punctuality, a new fleet of trains, improved customer experience, station upgrades and ticketing initiatives. The company has also been awarded a Gold Accreditation through the ideasUK Innovation Assessment.

Extreme Makeover: Train Edition

Over the last five years, Greater Anglia made two massive investments. First, the company decided to replace its entire fleet. The brand-new trains are due for completion at the end of 2021 — an unprecedented feat in terms of scale.

In addition to this vast undertaking, the company made a second major investment to replace its wide area network. State-of-the-art trains meant state-of-the-art technology that was ill suited for the aged, low-bandwidth network Greater Anglia had in place. In fact, the bandwidth became such an issue that in order to preserve service quality the company limited cross file sharing. With the new wide area network connecting stations across the region, the company was then able to utilize Microsoft 365, including OneDrive, Teams and SharePoint.

"Our new trains are deploying more modern technology and infrastructure, which meant we had a lot of legacy applications that were defunct when the new applications came in. From there, we began looking to push a lot of applications either to the cloud or to suppliers in their own cloud environments," said Himesh Patel, Head of IT Service Delivery at Greater Anglia.

CHALLENGES

- Eliminate burdensome tape backups
- Reduce backup costs
- Enable secure and reliable access to data
- Protect against increase in cyber threats

SOLUTIONS

- 11:11 Cloud Backup for Veeam Cloud Connect (BaaS)
- 11:11 Cloud Backup for Microsoft 365

BENEFITS

- Continuous data availability and business uptime
- Seamless integration with Veeam
- Innovative and comprehensive service in line with company objectives
- Flexibility for future growth

PROFILE

- Size: SMB
- Industry: Transportation

THE RESILIENT CLOUD PLATFORM

> "All the conversations we've had with the [11:11] team have been very transparent, very up front. There's been nothing hidden in the whole process. Our requirements were listened to and were factored in. The most important thing for us is building a partnership with a reliable provider. We're not in it for the short term, it's a long-term partnership."

Himesh Patel, Head of IT Service Delivery at Greater Anglia

Protecting Their Investment

Greater Anglia's journey to the cloud began with a mandate to secure the company's Microsoft 365 investment. Himesh and his team knew full well that Microsoft offered little in terms of backup protection and to make matters worse, malicious attacks, like malware, ransomware and phishing, were on the rise.

"It was a twofold exercise," said Himesh of beginning the cloud journey. "Evaluating where we could get the company to scale by leveraging the cloud, but also shifting our mindset toward embracing the innovative technology that's now available."

Himesh selected [11:11] Cloud Backup for Microsoft 365 and [11:11] Cloud Backup for Veeam Cloud Connect — solutions that could protect the company's critical data from internal and external cybersecurity threats, reduce the total cost of data protection and retention and help move its overall backup strategy away from outdated technologies like physical tape.

"[11:11] Secure Cloud Backup is an elegant solution, particularly because of its integration with Veeam," said Himesh. "It has worked quite well. The overall solutions architecture is what we were looking for and it's something we can certainly build on in the future."

Back(up) to the Future

According to Himesh, these latest innovations for Greater Anglia, especially its move to the cloud with [11:11] Secure Cloud Backup, are just the beginning of utilizing technology and embracing a change culture. "This has been a unique opportunity for us," said Himesh. "These first steps have been a massive transformation in how our business works and operates."

Himesh said he's looking forward to being able to utilize modern platforms to leverage economies of scale and drive cost efficiencies. Though they started off small, he said they've already started discussions about migrating everything to the cloud with [11:11]'s Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) option.

"We're committed to going through that cloud journey. Right now, we're trying to tick the right boxes in terms of the sort of people we want to do business with and have long term business relationships with," said Himesh. "[11:11] fits that bill."

Freeing Up IT Resources, Now and in the Future

Before migrating to the cloud, Greater Anglia had been backing up its mission-critical applications on premises via backup-to-tape technology. The team realized this technology was outdated and would not provide the flexibility and scalability that the company needed as their business grew and the IT strategy evolved. Himesh and his team were allocating a considerable amount of time, energy and resources on non-innovative maintenance, like the replacing and offsite storage of tapes. With a lean, 10-person IT team, resources were constrained to assist the business to further business objectives. With the move to the [11:11] cloud backup, valuable IT resources could be freed up to help the business complete more profitable business objectives, like rolling out the new trains, IT infrastructure and associated applications, wide area network, and new customer information screens at each station.

"From a strategy point of view, I think cloud backup is excellent," said Himesh. "It just moves everything up and out, removing our responsibility onsite. It will allow us to remove a lot of legacy hardware eventually."

Moving forward, as Greater Anglia's infrastructure becomes more cloud-based, Himesh and his team are also hoping to free up IT manpower by reducing end-user support. For example, during the coronavirus pandemic, employees working from home would need a VPN to access any data located on premises, meaning a need for more IT support.

"On the cloud journey, you've now got the ability to access your data, securely and remotely, while working from home. That plays into our strategy moving forward. We're reducing the footprint on premises infrastructure as well as the footprint for IT support," said Himesh. "What we don't want to do is get too deep in first and second line to end-user support, where there are tools and technology, for example self-service, that end users can take control of which then allows the team to focus on interesting, innovative projects to support the business."

THE RESILIENT CLOUD PLATFORM

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◈ MODERNIZE   ◈ PROTECT   ✳ MANAGE

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