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PIB Group Eradicates Pain of Business Acquisition and Creates a Platform for Rapid Growth

With a streamlined, secure and compliant email environment that's ready-made to underpin the insurance group's ambitious strategy of growth through acquisition and organic growth.

PIB Group is a growing group of insurance advisory businesses. Launched in 2015, it brings together companies and individuals recognized as leaders across a range of specialist markets to deliver the highest levels of insurance and risk management services from a growing network of offices staffed by more than 1400 people in over 40 locations.

Over recent years, the group has enjoyed rapid expansion, both through organic growth and an ambitious acquisition strategy - which has seen the business acquire around 30 general insurance brokers, specialist advisers and MGA services over the last four years.

At a Glance

- Supports 1400 email users across 40 offices.

- PIB Group wanted to complement its Microsoft 365 environment with integrated archiving and security.

- It wanted to de-risk its Microsoft 365 environment and create a platform to enable rapid integration of acquired companies.

Products

Cyber Resilience Pro Package

Includes: Secure Email Gateway + Targeted Threat Protection (URL, Attachment, Impersonation), Internal Email Protect, Continuity, Sync & Recover, Web Security, Large File Send, Secure Messaging, Privacy Pack, Archive.

Benefits

- Consolidating email archiving and security on a single platform designed to work seamlessly with Microsoft 365 has de-risked PIB Group's email environment.

- Highly effective defense against sophisticated email borne attacks – blocking impersonation attacks, weaponized attachments and malicious URLs.

- Easy deployment and responsive support helped to accelerate ROI.

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As a Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulated business which routinely processes customer financial data and other privileged information, PIB Group takes information security and compliance very seriously - and its Microsoft 365 email environment is central to those efforts.

Eddie Rogers, Group IT Manager explained: "Email security is massively important so it needs to be available and secure if we are to provide the client service that's expected of us and protect our reputation by ensuring sensitive data does not fall into the wrong hands."

"Similarly, we operate under a strict compliance regime, which means historical email must be available and easy to find as part of everything from dealing with customer issues to FCA compliance visits."

Email Risk

However, when Eddie and Infrastructure Manager, Luke Copeman, joined the business in 2016, they found an email environment that the business had outgrown and was difficult to manage.

The situation threatened to expose the business to security and compliance risks, and represented a barrier to the rapid, seamless integration of acquired businesses that is so important to protecting the value of those deals.

Eddie said: "When we arrived, we were delighted to see that the business already had Mimecast email archiving in place, having found it an outstanding solution in previous roles. But the solution was managed by a third party, so everything was a bit disjointed and we didn't have access to the full functionality. To make matters worse, it was paired with email security from a different vendor, which created all kinds of problems."

"Logging into multiple systems to manage the email environment was an operational headache and wasted a lot of time. Concurrently, the lack of integration between our email security and archiving represented an information security risk. For instance, we were seeing a growing threat from advanced attacks like C-level impersonation and malicious URLs or attachments in emails."

A Strategic Imperative

Meanwhile, these same issues created challenges for Luke in his role migrating acquired companies onto the PIB Group Microsoft 365 email environment.

"A big part of my role is migrating acquired companies, so the first thing I'll do is look at their existing systems and work out how to quickly and safely move them over to our core environment. The ability to do that is crucial to the success of any deal."

"People in acquired businesses need to feel part of the group quickly, and so do clients who otherwise have the chance to vote with their feet when insurance renewals come around."

"But to deliver that kind of seamless transition, you need a core email environment that is secure and easy to manage, which de-risks email data ingestion while making it relatively straightforward to provision new services and manage the entire email environment."

"When we arrived, it's fair to say the group's core email environment did not provide the platform we needed to do that."

According to Eddie, any inability to migrate acquired businesses can create compliance issues and increase costs: "Once we buy a business, we are liable for its systems. So, if we can't migrate them over quickly, we will inherit any security issues and could even end up paying for licensing and supporting legacy systems until a migration was complete – and that could take some time."

A Joined-up Solution

Given the range of issues associated with the disjointed email environment, Eddie and Luke quickly made implementing an integrated, single solution a priority for PIB Group.

"The aim was to consolidate onto a single solution, so we'd be more secure and have a really useful archive while realizing economies of scale and eliminating the costs, the collaboration barriers and the security risks that come from having to manage multiple systems."

Eddie Rogers, Group IT Manager

"But we also felt we wanted a progressive technology partner able to offer expert support because, whenever we acquire a company, the challenge is different, depending on its approach to IT, email and security."

"Having worked with Mimecast before we knew it could provide the joined-up solutions we needed to secure and streamline our core environment, and the support we needed to integrate acquired businesses more efficiently. It was clearly the ideal solution."

> **"Mimecast support made a huge difference in helping us to set everything up. We were put in touch with specialists, who were brilliant in terms of their knowledge. It really was an encyclopedia of everything Mimecast, so we were able to sort out everything over a few sessions. We'd tell the guys how we wanted it set up, then work through that with them. There were no questions they couldn't answer."**
>
> *Eddie Rogers, Group IT Manager*

A Seamless Transition

With that in mind, PIB Group chose to deploy integrated Mimecast email security and cloud archiving across its Microsoft 365 environment and paired that solution with Mimecast Gold Support. That support, along with Eddie and Luke's previous experience working with Mimecast proved vital in configuring the solution to PIB Group's needs.

According to Luke, that also included creating bespoke configurations: "We had an encryption policy that our Information Security team was keen to replicate, so we didn't have to redocument how we do that for our employees. Porting over that kind of detail from one vendor to another is not always straightforward, but we had no issues at all and were really pleased with the outcome."

Eddie, meanwhile, is in no doubt that Mimecast support helped to accelerate return on investment and de-risk the migration: "It would have been a huge risk to implement the solution without that support. We're routing all our email domains through Mimecast and, had anything gone wrong, it would have had a huge impact for our 1400 users, and the business generally."

Compliant, Secure and Easy

Both Eddie and Luke have been delighted with the move to Mimecast.

A single, secure cloud archive has made it easier to identify and hold historical emails for evidential purposes and carry out compliance audits, according to Eddie: "It's huge to have the archive to call upon when we're dealing with liability claims against the business. It takes a matter of seconds to find all relevant emails and apply a legal hold, but it also makes compliance audits much easier and the fact that our people can self-serve in terms of finding archived emails saves a lot of time for the IT team."

The Microsoft 365 environment for PIB Group is now more secure too.

"Before, we were seeing a lot of phishing and whaling attacks targeting our C-suite and looking for payments to bank accounts. That is one massive benefit of having Mimecast Targeted Threat Protection (TTP), which protects us from that kind of threat."

"It's made a huge difference, adding a vital extra layer of security. The biggest difference is just how effective it is at blocking the more sophisticated attacks. Without Mimecast in place we could potentially be much more open to successful attacks, and just dealing with those would be a full-time job for somebody."

Eddie Rogers, Group IT Manager

Meanwhile, the Mimecast Administration Console has made it much easier to manage and maintain the email environment for PIB Group. "It's just so joined up," Eddie explained. "The Mimecast console makes the administration side 100% easier because we can see everything in one place, making it so easy to manage."

"It's saved us so much time," he continued. "We're quite a small IT team in a big business so knowing we can trust Mimecast to do its job in the background, and call on expert support when we need it, is huge. It gives us the space we need to focus on higher value, more strategic work."

Supporting Rapid Growth

Crucially, the group's improved email environment also enables the team to migrate acquired businesses onto its core Microsoft 365 environment more quickly, without compromising on security and usability.

Luke commented: "One thing we've really noticed since dealing with Mimecast support is that integrating new businesses has really picked up speed. It's pretty seamless now and we've got it down to a fine art. In fact, we bought a couple of businesses in Croydon recently that we integrated email wise in two or three months after purchase – the whole environment.

A big part of that is data ingestion, which would be much harder without Mimecast. Now we simply approach Mimecast, and tell them 'we've got this archive, in this format' and it gets added to our ingestion program. Mimecast does it for us, safely and securely, which means people in those acquired businesses very quickly see the benefit of an integrated, accessible and secure archive."

As Eddie pointed out, the speed of integration and the difference it makes to employees on the ground has far reaching benefits: "First of all, it really helps to make acquisitions work. People can immediately see that we are making positive steps to improve things for them, making their jobs easier and helping them to work smarter. That has to be beneficial in terms of keeping employees from acquired businesses engaged and on board."

"Just as important, Mimecast helps to ensure that IT is not a barrier to growth. The fact that we can integrate each acquired business in six weeks or so rather than six months means we realize the efficiencies of the group model and remove legacy costs from the equation more quickly."