

Formal Investments Case Study



Managed IT



Streamlined Cloud



Cyber Security



IT Support



Digital Innovation




Modern Workplace



Business Connectivity



Telecoms

A photograph of three IT professionals in a server room. A woman on the left, wearing glasses and a blue shirt, is looking at a monitor. A man in the center, wearing glasses and a blue shirt, is looking at the same monitor. A man on the right, with a beard and dark hair, is looking at the monitor. They are all wearing headphones. The background shows server racks and a blue light.

How a co-managed IT service can deliver outstanding benefits

Strategic support means Inflection Point are far more than just a service desk

Formal Investments is a private investment and asset management company based in the South West. Their focus is on property development and they have a property portfolio across the UK.

Formal Investments' limited experience with a previous IT company had ultimately been unsatisfactory, and they were on the lookout for a new IT company to provide service desk support. But in just 18 months they realised how much more strategic value they could benefit from by fully engaging with an IT consultancy like Inflection Point.

Victoria Flay, Office Manager at Formal investments, describes how we initially helped and how our service evolved.

Chasing our tails

Victoria begins: "Speaking personally, I have previously worked within very large companies which have their own IT department. So at Formal Investments I was not used to the world of outsourced IT.


"With our former supplier it wasn't working terribly well. Underlying problems were not addressed: so we would find ourselves in a loop of experiencing an issue, having it remedied, and then someone else experiencing it, for example. And any project-based work like migrating to M365 left unanswered questions too.

The search for a new supplier

"We are a small team here at our head office and as long as our computers worked, no-one gave them any further thought. Initially, I was tasked with just finding a new service desk provider.

"I came across Inflection Point, and Joe and Iain came in to see me. I quickly realised how much more value we could get from an IT provider by starting to solve the root problems. A proactive approach could empower us to create big efficiencies and therefore productivity gains.

"So we signed up with Inflection Point, and an email issue opened the conversation as to how we could drive more profound improvement."



“Over the last year and a half it has been so positive working with Inflection Point. There are times when I would have been really stuck if I did not have their input.”

Starting to level up

Several areas were identified to deliver major benefits. Victoria tells us more: “One of the first underlying issues to be flagged was our server. It was slow and out of date, and would never provide the platform for us to flourish with cloud software like M365; so this was marked for an early upgrade.

“Then there was cyber security. When you are not engaged with IT every day, it is easy to pay insufficient attention to this. We did, unfortunately, suffer an email hack and had to notify all our contacts. I am pleased to say that it was not too serious and mainly served as a wakeup call.

“Under Inflection Point’s guidance we implemented two-factor authentication, a software proof-point to quarantine suspicious emails and dark web monitoring. We now stay focused by having a daily report telling us how many threats have been defended.

“Going several steps further, Inflection Point carried out an IT review for the whole company which highlighted out-of-date software to be updated and introduced automation processes to improve efficiency and ensure important tasks do not slip through the net. They have even advised quarterly cyber security training for staff so that these issues stay front of mind.”

A collaborative relationship

Victoria takes the lead at Formal Investments in working with Inflection Point, and values the relationship: “I am quite happy to read about some new technology and consider how it would help us, but IT is not my day job so I can’t always see the bigger picture. I know that I can go to Joe at Inflection Point and get an honest answer about how it would work in practice. If it is not quite right he will always recommend a more complete solution for our consideration.

“When we partnered with them they said they wanted to be part of our team and it really feels like that.

I have direct access to two of their senior staff and along with my managing director we have very productive strategy meetings.

“The rest of our team are typically in contact with the Inflection Point service desk. We have seen this grow and develop since we began working with them and it is a really good fit now. We have got property managers working across the UK, and after initially working with just our head office we asked Inflection Point to support them too.

“They tend to require a higher level of support and we have been really impressed with the way in which Inflection Point will go the extra mile. We’ve noticed the improvement in integrating these colleagues more with the head office. Inflection Point’s service works well on a national basis as well as with our local support.”



Strategic input

At Inflection Point we firmly believe that working with clients strategically is the way to deliver the most value. Victoria agrees: “Even before the pandemic struck or we knew what was coming, the work that Inflection Point was doing would come to stand us in good stead. They had flagged that our aging desktop machines were holding us back and helped us invest in new more powerful laptops.

“As you can imagine, to have this already in place seemed like a godsend when suddenly home working was imposed across the country. This was then backed up with staff training to ensure they worked safely and efficiently – saving files in the cloud rather than local hard drives and that kind of thing. It is a significant advantage to have an IT partner who we can work with on this.

“Looking ahead they are advising on new property management software when the time is right for us; further cloud solutions; and helping us, in incremental stages, to get more out of all the features of M365.”

Reflections

So with a relationship that has blossomed over the first 18 months and providing so much more than what was originally intended, Victoria shares her ideas about what is important when choosing an IT consultancy: “Obviously, the technical knowledge has to be there and the capacity to help. But for me it is not just what an IT company knows, but that they care for your business and understand how their service fits into the bigger picture. Rather than imposing a finished solution, it means listening to what will fit with your company and adapting the solution appropriately.

“Over the last year and a half it has been so positive working with Inflection Point. There are times when I would have been really stuck if I did not have their input. And with technology changing so quickly, it is reassuring to have them as our own experts who can keep us updated on new developments and advise on the right strategy.”

Top ways Inflection Point helped Formal Investments



Service desk support at local and national level.



Upgraded aging desktop computer stock with modern laptops.



Robust new cybersecurity measures implemented.



Remote working support during the pandemic.



Server upgraded to meet the demands of cloud computing.



Regular strategic consultancy with senior staff.



Staff IT training and development

Thank you

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if there's anything you need.

Inflection Point