

mindSCOPE™

mindSCOPE Finds Rackspace® Fanatical Support® Beneficial

Operating out of offices in Toronto and Los Angeles, mindSCOPE Staffing Software focuses on delivering applicant tracking and candidate testing software geared toward the staffing industry. mindSCOPE relies heavily on Rackspace to provide a resilient infrastructure on which to deliver their revenue-generating web application.

But when mindSCOPE developed a new application, one they hoped would become the future of their business, they chose to move this new product to a different hosting provider. Due to poor service and response times at this new provider, mindSCOPE's clients experienced an unacceptable amount of downtime.

During the course of these difficulties, mindSCOPE described the provider responsible for the issues as unresponsive and unprofessional, while the staff at Rackspace, which were in no way responsible, offered friendly and helpful advice. It became clear to mindSCOPE that the level of service and support that it felt were vital to offering its customers was not going to be achieved by remaining with this new hosting provider. As a result, mindSCOPE decided to move this application over to Rackspace, a company that it felt reflected its own level of customer service and professionalism.

Situation

mindSCOPE Staffing Software is one of the largest providers of Active Server Pages (ASP) and data networking solutions geared toward the staffing industry. In 1999, mindSCOPE moved from being solely a distributor of computer-based training software to a professional software development firm by creating their staffing software product known as mindSCOPE™.

For staffing agencies that receive hundreds of resumes by email or CD, the mindSCOPE software electronically extracts the candidate's information into a database and automatically creates a candidate record, saving time and eliminating manual errors. The application also allows interfacing with job postings on a company's website, as well as advanced searching and matching, allowing agencies to narrow candidate lists based on certain criteria, offering the most qualified candidate for the job.

mindSCOPE originally hosted this legacy product in house, but as their client base grew so did a need for more reliability and uptime. The company looked for a dependable hosting expert to support this application, as well as their website and database, and ultimately chose Rackspace because of its 100 percent network uptime guarantee and famed Fanatical Support.

But when mindSCOPE recently developed a new web-based product, CURA™, they decided to have this product hosted with a different provider.

"Our legacy product runs on SQL database and is fairly simple; one server can handle everything," says Kris Abbott, technical manager, mindSCOPE. "But with our CURA product and the advent of more technology, our configuration grew into a larger and more complex setup. Being a small company on a limited budget, we opted to move our CURA product elsewhere."

So mindSCOPE kept their legacy product hosted at Rackspace but moved their CURA configuration to a different hosting provider.

"We learned the hard way that what you pay for is what you get," says Abbott. mindSCOPE soon became very dissatisfied with the service they were receiving regarding their CURA product.

"Through an emergency situation, we came to realize we were dealing with an entirely different type of organization," says Becky Evans, president of mindSCOPE. "We came to realize what great service we had at Rackspace and it wasn't worth what we were saving a month to deal with."

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Evans described the day like any other Friday. She received a call that there had been a problem with the servers and their website would be down, but was reassured that everything would be alright and the problem was being handled. She was confident that things would be back to normal soon.

Then 5 p.m. came and everyone went home; problem not solved. "That was the real issue," says Evans. "We were left to deal with some very junior level support. Five o'clock came, and they were like, 'well too bad, have a nice weekend; we'll talk to you Monday.' We were unable to get any high level questions answered. There was absolutely no customer service."

Solution

With nowhere else to turn and still having an account at Rackspace, mindSCOPE decided to give their Account Manager a call in hopes he was still in the office that evening. "Luckily our Account Manager was still there," says Abbott. "He helped us confirm what we already knew was a bad situation. The other provider was very slow in identifying the seriousness of the problem."

Their Account Manager at Rackspace provided a list of detailed support questions and suggestions to provide to those high-level technicians when they were finally able to locate and speak to them. As a result, mindSCOPE was able to get their application back up and running by Monday.

"Our client's data is their business. Those resumes are their property and ultimately their currency," says Evans. "Errors were made by the provider's technicians that resulted in our lack of confidence that it was ethical to leave our clients most valuable resources in their keeping."

Rackspace did not do anything specific to physically solve mindSCOPE's problem. "What Rackspace did that emphasized their Fanatical Support was work hard through the weekend preparing a configuration to move our CURA product over to Rackspace," says Evans. "We were already considering coming back. We had signed a one-year contract with the previous provider that was coming to an end, and obviously we were not happy with them. This was just the final nail in the coffin."

Benefits

To ensure something like this never happens again, mindSCOPE relies on Rackspace's proactive, technical expertise, fueled by their famed Fanatical Support.

"We worked hard with Rackspace on setting up multiple fault tolerance and redundancy," says Abbott. "Rackspace did an amazing job building this redundancy within the servers and helping us do all this within a limited budget. We may be a small business in comparison to others, but Rackspace has never made us feel small or unimportant."

According to mindSCOPE, it all comes down to customer service. "Rackspace has always met and exceeded our expectations," says Abbott. "With Rackspace we never find ourselves in those tough situations. They have always been proactive, keeping us up-to-date in regards to how our application is interacting with the hardware and helping us attack a problem before it happens."

When mindSCOPE first moved their CURA product over to Rackspace, there was a time of trial and error. "There's an amount of growing pains that comes along with any new application," says Evans. "At the beginning, we were overcompensating on our backup and were running into tremendous overages. Rackspace waved these overage charges and helped determine how much backup we actually need, whereas another company might have just charged us."

mindSCOPE has three HP DL385 servers running Windows 2003 Enterprise, two firewalls and managed backup. Rackspace is also proactively working on updating mindSCOPE's configuration so that the legacy and CURA products can operate on the same server, ultimately saving mindSCOPE more money.

"Customer service in a nut shell is what it's all about," says Abbott. "We too are in a service business. We strive for something very similar. You have to keep your customers happy and Rackspace does that through Fanatical Support. To me, that means being prompt, knowledgeable, friendly, well communicated, consistent and reassuring, and Rackspace backs that up day in and day out."

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