



Case Study

Rathbones
Look forward

Rathbones embraces people-first workplace experiences

A fast-tracked digital transformation builds a foundation for next-generation ways of working

Do what matters

Business situation: Pandemic lockdown calls for new ways of working

Rathbones provides individual investment and wealth management services for private clients, charities, trustees and professional partners. Like many well-established financial services firms, employees typically engaged clients using traditional means, including high-quality printed reports and face-to-face meetings. But when the global pandemic put everyone in lockdown, Rathbones' teams had to adapt quickly.

While the human element was always a critical aspect of the firm's reputation for personalized client services, that approach became challenging. "The pandemic put a lot of strain on the processes built around being in the office, being able to just turn to the side and speak to colleagues," says Chris Handley, Rathbones' IT strategy and change director.

The company also faced technology challenges. "Pre-COVID, all our infrastructure was in a data center. You had to be in the office to use it," says Paul Sexton, IT operations director at Rathbones. Investment managers carried folders of paperwork to meetings and sorted through it in front of clients to support conversations with appropriate data.

The firm's legacy IT infrastructure, data systems and conferencing technology could not adequately support the transition to remote work. That, plus high utility use, made it challenging for Rathbones to continue its direct, paper-based services. Rethinking its workplace and business strategy, which included a move to the cloud, became necessary to continue business during the pandemic and support hybrid working environments for employees into the future. And Rathbones only had a short time frame to make the transition.

"We were looking at ways of working and how technology could better support staff in a digital era. We just expedited that."

– Chris Handley
IT Strategy and Change Director, Rathbones

An Avanade health check of [Microsoft Dynamics 365](#) CRM looked at Rathbones' wider technology strategy, including client devices and laptops for remote consultations.

Company Name: Rathbones Group Plc

Country: UK

Industry: Capital Markets

Company Size: 2,000

Solution: Microsoft 365, Microsoft Dynamics 365, Microsoft Teams

Solution: A workplace transformation powered by the Microsoft ecosystem

Rathbones found a trusted adviser in Avanade, relying on our experience and expertise across the entire Microsoft technology stack to help develop its IT strategy. Our [Advisory](#) team helped the firm prioritize key transformation initiatives and map out a digital workplace strategy for the future. We then worked with the IT team to update its technology infrastructure, including:

- A network upgrade to put cloud at the center of technology services and enable video-rich collaboration for employees upon their return to the office
- Transition to zero trust networking so colleagues can work securely anywhere using [Microsoft 365](#) workplace tools
- Modernization of IT service management tools and processes to better serve colleagues and support hybrid working
- Digital enhancements for printing
- [Microsoft Teams](#) setup for workplace collaboration and Microsoft cloud telephony, so client calls can be handled seamlessly in the new hybrid working model

With this workplace transformation, Rathbones enabled its employees to deliver mission-critical business processes virtually and create consistently high-quality client experiences. It also set up modern, secure services to support hybrid, remote and in-person working when it came time to return to the office.

"Digital has enhanced the client experience, even in terms of reporting," says Handley. A significant number of clients are taking quarterly evaluations digitally on My Rathbones, combined with personal services in a live phone call at a click. Massively reduced paper usage contributes to Rathbones' sustainability targets.

Results: New efficiencies, new flexibility, new opportunities

Adopting software-as-a-service and platform-as-a-service allowed the business to improve workplace experiences. This rapid digital transformation established new, flexible ways of working for Rathbones employees. The firm replaced paper-based processes in favor of digital outputs, resulting in 80% less printing during the pandemic and a reduction in power consumption of 30%.

Other results include:

- Increased stability and efficiency with a significant reduction in service calls, signaling improved client experiences
- Better access to data analytics to support decision-making, nurture leads and enhance relationships
- Ability to maintain regulatory compliance
- Increased ability to innovate and integrate flexibility

What matters to Rathbones is providing a positive experience for both employees and clients. "The vibe is great. It's really changed," says Handley. "I think that's the biggest thing I've seen. We've gone from 'It's not broke, don't touch it,' to 'Wow, I can see the benefits of this new technology. I can use that to enhance not only my own experience of working at Rathbones but the client experience as well.'"

By establishing an enhanced employee workplace experience, Rathbones is better positioned to expand its IT talent pool from across the UK and attract a new, tech-savvy generation of clients. The digital capabilities of a hybrid workplace balance the need for efficiency and flexibility, while enabling Rathbones to maintain its reputation for personalized client services.

"We're delivering more change in the business, and employees are asking for more change and excited about how new technology, new digital capabilities, will help them work better, more efficiently, which ultimately is about improving the client experience."

– **Chris Handley**
IT Strategy and Change Director, Rathbones

About Rathbones Group Plc

Rathbones Group Plc (Rathbones) provides individual investment and wealth management services for private clients, charities, trustees and professional partners. We have been trusted for generations to manage and preserve our clients' wealth. Our tradition of investing and acting responsibly has been with us from the beginning and continues to lead us forward. Our ambition is to be recognised as the UK's most responsible wealth manager. Rathbones has over 2,000 staff in 14 UK locations and Jersey; its headquarters is 8 Finsbury Circus, London.



North America

Seattle
Phone +1 206 239 5600
America@avanade.com

South America

Sao Paulo
AvanadeBrasil@avanade.com

Asia-Pacific

Australia
Phone +61 2 9005 5900
AsiaPac@avanade.com

Europe

London
Phone +44 0 20 7025 1000
Europe@avanade.com

About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital, cloud and advisory services, industry solutions and design-led experiences across the Microsoft ecosystem. Every day, our 60,000 professionals in 26 countries make a genuine human impact for our clients, their employees and their customers. Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at www.avanade.com.

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