

At a glance

Case Study: City Sales

Customer:

City Sales

Industry:

Real Estate

CodeBlue Services Used:

IT Support Services

Cyber Security Services

Key Benefits:

- Proactive IT Services that are future proofed for the growth and development of City Sales.
- A robust and fully managed layered cyber security solution.



Shrugging off Cyber Attacks just the tip of the CodeBlue Iceberg at Auckland's City Sales

At 4.30pm on Friday 15 November 2016 a cyber attack on City Sales – Auckland's busiest apartment sales and letting company - set out to paralyse the business.

A Crypto locker virus was triggered by an employee opening a seemingly innocent attachment. The virus slipped through the network defences and overnight began to attack and lock City Sales' File Server, paving the way for the hacker to demand a ransom to unlock the server.

Instead, within an hour of detecting the attack, CodeBlue had restored the locked files from backup and deleted the virus. Normal network access was resumed with no loss of data and with barely a blip in City Sales operations.

A big factor in the speedy recovery was the work done in response to a similar Crypto locker virus attack earlier in the year on the RDS Server which began to compromise the Application Server. Although no data was lost, and City Sales' systems were back up and running within hours, it sparked CodeBlue to further strengthen cyber defences by increasing backup frequency to two-hourly intervals, adding its new Internet Shield defensive layer, and reviewing processes and policies, including staff education.

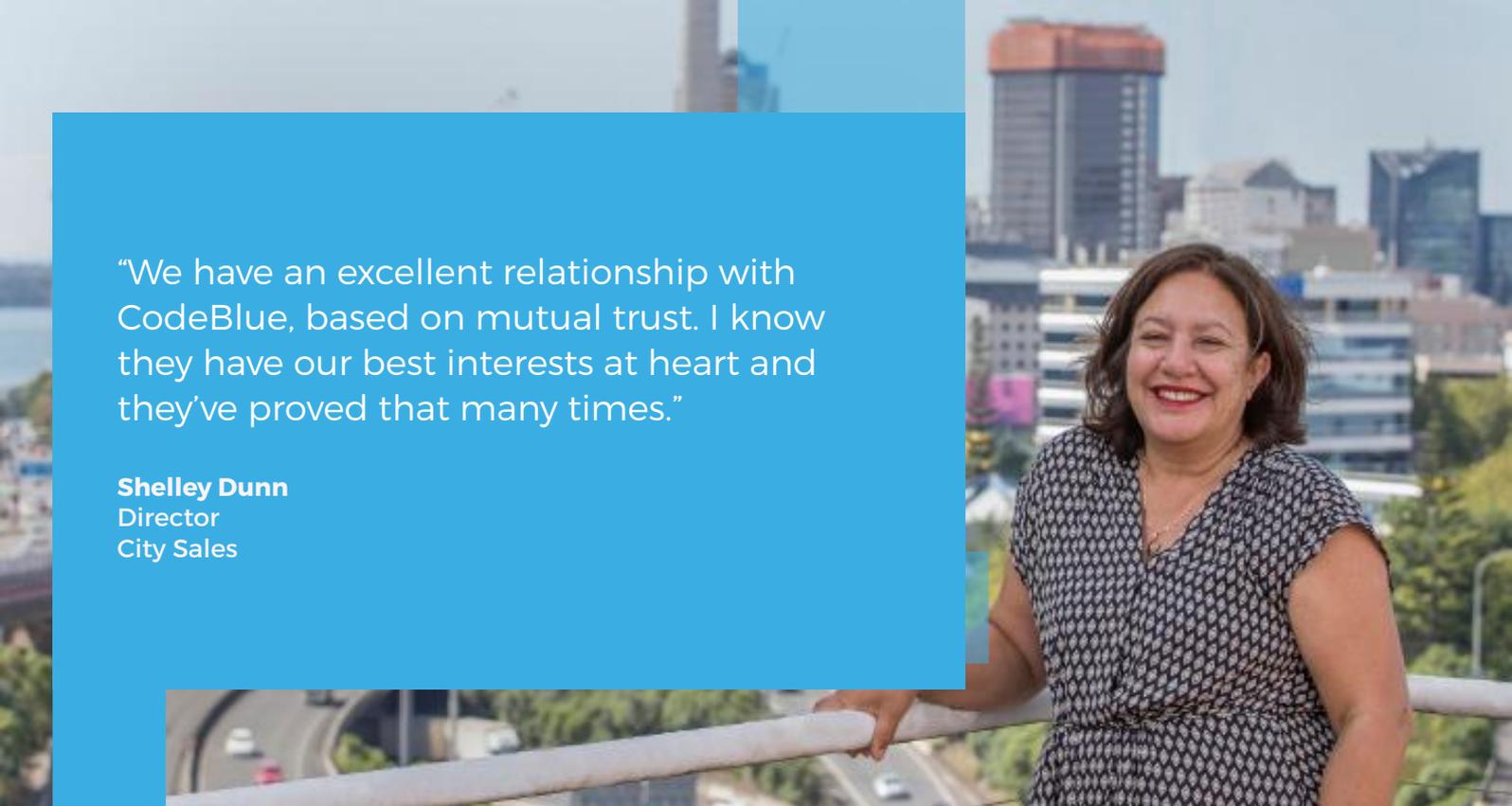
Resident on the applications server was City Sales' most valuable IT business asset – a unique database holding full details on more than 26,000 apartments across almost 500 buildings.

Without that database - painstakingly compiled since City Sales was founded in 1991 as Auckland's first specialist apartment sales, renting, leasing and management company – the business would be seriously threatened.

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Shelley Dunn

Director
City Sales



“We have an excellent relationship with CodeBlue, based on mutual trust. I know they have our best interests at heart and they’ve proved that many times.”

Shelley Dunn
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A close partnership that’s continuously developed

For City Sales Director Shelley Dunn the cyber latest attack was just another routine IT issue successfully resolved as part of a close partnership continuously developed since CodeBlue took over outsourced management of her IT infrastructure in 2013.

Back then, City Sales had been struggling to find the right IT service partner fit for its rapidly growing business.

“We had used several IT companies and were not happy with their services,” Shelley Dunn recalls. “CodeBlue was recommended by one of their clients. But we also looked at other options. We chose CodeBlue because we felt they were the best fit for our business in terms of being interested in it, having experience in similar sized businesses, being prepared to work with us as we were at the time and take time to get to know us.”

What City Sales wanted, CodeBlue has delivered. On engagement CodeBlue went through a process of understanding City Sales business as a prelude to beginning a continuous improvement process designed to give

City Sales the best possible value from its IT infrastructure investment.

CodeBlue’s City Sales account manager Richard Watt takes up the story: “We started out by stabilising their existing infrastructure, including urgent work to protect their data, such as offsite backup and first level antivirus and anti-spam defences, alongside service desk support sufficient to identify and fix problems quickly.

“We then worked with Shelley to plan and implement a major refresh of their infrastructure designed to give them a much more robust environment, with state of the art monitoring to identify faults before they occur, and give them a much more economical, higher value IT environment.”

The new infrastructure is now fully operational. Although, a full cloud solution would have some advantages, after a careful weighing of cost benefits CodeBlue implemented a more economical and highly secure HP SAN solution comprising two HP DL 380P GEN8 servers, an MSA 2040 SAN, and a backup server, all on premise.



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The refresh included a full suite of the latest generation Microsoft software including Windows Server, Microsoft Office, Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft SQL Server. Also a Remote Desktop Services server farm to support their sales staff in the field.

An important strategic objective of the infrastructure refresh was to give City Sales staff fast but secure access to the property database and other internal systems.

With sales staff using their own laptops and other devices the risks of security breaches via devices outside the network, as well as unauthorized downloading of proprietary data, had to

be carefully provided for and managed. This was handled as part of CodeBlue's 'defence in depth' DR and cyber security services which include very high data resilience via high frequency server backups held off site, and extends to intrusion protection at all access points, including internal and external devices, internet access and firewall security, as well as the latest email security. The highly sophisticated email security and email management solution sets and monitors email 'rules' to protect against sensitive information leaving the network - as well as virus and spam filtering of both inbound and outbound email.

An 'It just works' infrastructure and a very happy customer.

The City Sales managed services agreement with CodeBlue includes service desk cover and 24x7 technical support as required. CodeBlue remote monitoring and management keeps a constant watch on the infrastructure, proactively identifying issues or problems before they affect the business.

Data and network resilience and security is now truly world class and even in the event of the total loss through natural disaster of City Sales in house servers and systems, the entire infrastructure could be up and running in the Cloud within 24 hours.

The net result is an 'It just works' infrastructure and a very happy customer.

Shelley Dunn sums up the CodeBlue relationship as follows:

"We have an excellent relationship which is based on mutual trust built up over time. I know that they have our best interest at heart and have seen it proven many times.

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making sure that everything runs as well as it can – she prefers it to be perfect. Our account manager Richard Watt has a meeting with me (and Simona) monthly where we discuss the monthly costs and any fine tuning or future requirements/issues.

"Things don't always work perfectly and that's when I really rely on CodeBlue.

The support team respond in a timely manner – much faster than many others I have dealt with. Simona goes the extra mile and Richard is always there making sure I'm happy with the service.

"Simona and Richard don't treat me like an idiot when we talk about our IT but they also explain everything we're doing in ways I can understand.

"The main thing about Code Blue is that our business is largely deadline driven and if things go wrong our clients don't want to hear excuses – they want to have things sorted quickly. The other is that we have an obligation to ensure that our sales and property management teams have good working systems whenever they want to work and wherever from. They would be very frustrated if things kept breaking – and my life would be very stressful."

CodeBlue is the largest nationwide IT services company serving mid-sized companies and organisations from branches across New Zealand. To find out how CodeBlue can help you extract maximum value from your infrastructure investment:

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