

Helping pharma and biotech improve global health with hybrid IT

Customer story



PharPoint Research implements a hybrid IT strategy by pairing Flexential Disaster Recovery-as-a-Service and multi-tenant cloud to protect customer data and support clients in their mission to improve global health through clinical research.



Flexential solution portfolio



Colocation



Cloud



Data Protection

Flexential partnership highlights

- Robust security to meet FDA requirements
- DRaaS solution to protect data and maintain system availability
- Cloud frees internal IT team to work on more strategic initiatives

Quick facts about PharPoint Research

- 900+ clinical trials participated in since 2007
- 95% business repeat rate
- 2020 Triangle Business Journal Life Sciences Award – Winner

The history

PharPoint Research is a privately owned, U.S.-based contract research organization (CRO) that offers clinical operations, biostatistics and statistical programming, data management and strategic clinical trial consulting services to pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies of all sizes.



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Ted Beverly
Director of Information Technology
PharPoint Research

The challenge

Disaster recovery to protect research data and meet compliance obligations

To support clients investigating therapies in oncology, infectious disease and neurology, PharPoint Research needs a hybrid IT infrastructure with unwavering security and availability that meets the FDA’s rigorous compliance standards.

PharPoint has relied on Flexential colocation to deliver this critical hybrid IT infrastructure since 2009. To further protect its clients’ data and its own operational integrity, PharPoint recently explored disaster recovery (DR) solutions. After evaluating multiple providers, including Flexential, on their security, reliability, cost effectiveness and customer focus, PharPoint chose Flexential DRaaS to promote its IT resilience. “Flexential’s security and compliance exceeded that of the other providers we considered,” said Ted Beverly, director of information technology at PharPoint Research. “Flexential went above and beyond during the process, and were incredibly responsive.”

With a plan in place to implement a cloud-based DR solution, PharPoint took the opportunity to talk to Flexential about migrating its production environment to the cloud as well. With a hardware refresh scheduled within the year, the timing was right to adopt a full cloud strategy and offload its IT team of the responsibilities of managing hardware.

The solution

Cloud deployments promote flexibility while bolstering security and availability

Flexential’s highly certified team of cloud experts worked with PharPoint to design a hybrid IT solution to meet its unique needs. Utilizing both Flexential DRaaS and Flexential’s multi-tenant cloud for its primary environment, PharPoint achieved a high availability, cost-effective environment that can scale with its growth and meet its clients’ needs around security and compliance.

Flexential DRaaS offers flexible DR with end-to-end protection of PharPoint’s systems and applications to ensure business continuity. Powered by Zerto’s IT Resiliency Platform, Flexential DRaaS offers near real-time replication of data to support PharPoint’s recovery time objectives (RTO) and recovery point objectives (RPO). This allows PharPoint to quickly failover its environment to ensure availability and minimize data loss.

Flexential compliant multi-tenant cloud helps PharPoint achieve the agility of the public cloud without sacrificing security. Purpose-built for mission-critical applications, the enterprise-class cloud is backed by high-performing SLAs, including 99.999% availability of cloud compute and 100% availability of cloud network infrastructure. As part of this solution, PharPoint also relies on Flexential's partnership with SilverSky for firewall and VPN services.

Both solutions utilize cutting-edge technology and are fully managed by Flexential's team of experts. Flexential

cloud solutions also offer self-service capabilities for increased visibility and 24/7/365 support. Flexential nationwide footprint offers the diversity to ensure PharPoint's evolving needs are met. This diversity allowed PharPoint to choose key markets for cloud deployments. With Flexential DRaaS out of Denver – Englewood and production cloud at Atlanta – Norcross, PharPoint attains the geographic diversity to ensure a local disaster can't impact both sites. "Flexential offers a product that continues to grow and get better—month after month, year after year," said Beverly.

The results

High availability cloud and DR engagement ensure clinical trials stay on course

The introduction of Flexential DRaaS has strengthened PharPoint's resilience, ensuring both the integrity of its customers' data and the availability of its systems. This is critical to PharPoint's operations as clients often require same day readings on data. Delays in providing this information can impede a client's ability to move research forward and impact PharPoint's ability to retain the customer. The unrelenting reliability of PharPoint's IT backbone and its customer-driven focus are pivotal in maintaining its 95% customer retention rate and adhering to standard timelines that are faster than the industry average. "Uptime and performance are important. If the infrastructure is not there to support a request—especially one with a fast turnaround time—we can't get the data to our clients and this could delay next steps," said Beverly.

Flexential security also helps PharPoint attract and retain customers. While Flexential's highly secure, compliant environment was already a feather in PharPoint's cap, the introduction of a DR solution further strengthened its security stance by enabling it to failover its environment in a matter of minutes, minimizing data loss and ensuring the continuity of operations. "With Flexential DRaaS, our RPO is 15 to 30 seconds, as opposed to 72 hours before Flexential," said Beverly. "This seals the deal for clients with concerns around the security and safety of their data."

Flexential's compliance is also important to PharPoint. By offering on-demand, self-service access to its

compliance documentation, Flexential eases the auditing process for PharPoint and its customers, and ensures required documents are readily accessible.

PharPoint's new cloud deployments are also cost-effective as the company no longer has to purchase, manage, warranty and license hardware. "We're reducing the headache and saving money in the long run," said Beverly. "Our internal IT team can better spend their time on advancing strategic, technological needs that support our business and our clients."

Utilizing Flexential for both its primary cloud and its DR solution also simplifies IT management by providing a unified contact for PharPoint. "It's my goal as an IT director to keep my vendor list as small as possible," explained Beverly. "If I have questions, I have one person to contact to take care of it. With Flexential I know I'll get a response within minutes."

This cloud solution also allows PharPoint to effectively support a remote workforce. Plus, with an office located on the North Carolina coast, PharPoint's employees are occasionally evacuated for hurricanes. Flexential infrastructure ensures the company has the bandwidth, connectivity and redundancy to continue to support clients from any location. "Any downtime is time that is taken away from our clients and our company, and that's just not acceptable," expressed Beverly. "Having a backing like Flexential that enables access from anywhere is a big boon for us."

Customer commitment

Flexential's dedication to its customers has also not gone unnoticed by PharPoint. When half the data center experienced an outage, Flexential supported its customers as they visited the site to download data and perform recovery tasks. Although PharPoint had the necessary redundancies in place to weather the outage, the company was impressed with Flexential's flexibility and customer commitment. "This is unheard of in any other market I've ever been at, and you definitely wouldn't get that from other vendors," noted Beverly. "Flexential also forgave everyone their bill for that month. That showed me what kind of a company they really are. They're there to help their customers out."



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As for PharPoint's future, the organization sees the potential for additional cloud services. Flexential's flexibility and security ensure PharPoint can continue to exceed client expectations in a field that strives to improve global health.