Stellar business benefits with IONOS

Renewable energy technology firm Sunsynk chose IONOS to power its Sunsynk Connect app, migrating a huge quantity of data from a cloud provider in Asia to the IONOS Cloud to ensure data protection and compliance, and long term reliability for all its customers.

Featured learnings

Sunsynk has been able to demonstrate its commitment to customer data security and compliance by moving to a European cloud provider.

Sunsynk got outstanding support from IONOS during migration, and now has access to superior technical help 24/7.

The IONOS Cloud has provided Sunsynk with a simple and flexible yet robustly scalable platform that can grow with the business.

SUN SYNK®

Sunsynk is a provider of cutting-edge renewable energy solutions, with a presence in 40 countries around the world. Sunsynk's innovative solar inverters and batteries enable consumers and businesses to harness and store more of the energy generated by solar panels and arrays. The Sunsynk Connect app enables customers to control and monitor their systems – and intelligently manage their energy usage – from anywhere in the world.

The challenge

Generating more power generates more data

With solar power, you're not only contributing to the greater good by choosing cleaner energy, you can also be much more in control of your own energy usage – choosing to use or store more energy when your solar panels are active, and using less (or accessing stored power) when there's less solar generation.

Sunsynk enables this through a combination of innovative inverters – the unit that converts direct current (DC) power generated by solar panels into the alternating current (AC) electricity that powers our homes – and batteries that can store solar-generated energy. With the Sunsynk Connect app, Sunsynk's customers can use information from their equipment and data from their smart devices (lighting, sockets and switches, and smart appliances such as washing machines) to control how and when that energy is used. For example, you might set an immersion heater to turn on, or start an electric car charger, to use up an oversupply of energy on a sunny day.

For Sunsynk, this means managing a huge amount of real-time data from different locations, including API (application programming interface) links to energy companies, and making it available via the cloud, in a format that's easy for customers to understand and use.

„We were hosting our backend systems, which include a customer database as well as a large statistical data platform, on a hyperscale cloud platform in Hong Kong, which is where our head office is based. But with many of our customers increasingly asking for data to be located in areas covered by the GDPR, we decided to look for a new partner based in the UK or Europe."

Joel Egan
Sunsynk's chief information officer (CIO)

Sunsynk was also keen to move away from the bespoke database solution created by its hosting provider. Migrating to a new platform would enable the team to move to a standardised database package, MongoDB, which would be easier to support and manage, and more flexible in the longer term.

"Having a provider who develops their own solutions for you is good in some ways, but the product is often more restricted and it does mean they have a hold on you – it can be a bit of a nightmare if you want to migrate away from them," Joel said.

The solution

A scalable platform – and outstanding support for migration

When it came to choosing a new provider, IONOS was head and shoulders above the alternatives. Many providers still don't offer hosted MongoDB, instead offering bespoke hosted database solutions similar to what Sunsynk already had, while providers like AWS didn't have the level of support that Sunsynk needed as a growing business. IONOS was able to offer both.

The IONOS team worked with Sunsynk to make sure that the new infrastructure, including MongoDB, would be able to grow relentlessly to any size, without complications. IONOS also gave Joel and his team amazing support as they moved more than 60 TB of data to the IONOS Cloud.

"With a major migration there's always a lot that could go wrong, especially when you're taking massive amounts of data from a cloud on one continent to another cloud on a different continent. So it was outstanding to have our account manager and product experts ready for a call at any time,"

Joel Egan
Sunsynk's chief information officer (CIO)

The Sunsynk Connect app is now up and running on the IONOS platform. As well as connecting to solar-generating customers, the platform also connects to a number of other data providers using APIs. This includes price and usage imports from national energy companies, which enables Sunsynk customers to see how their solar generation is affecting their regular bills and generate return on investment reports for their equipment.

This is all connected through the IONOS Cloud, which comes with the flexibility to grow as needed. With the Data Center Designer, the Sunsynk team can even provision new resources themselves when they're needed – the easy-to-use drag and drop interface makes it simple.

Since the initial migration, IONOS has upgraded its MongoDB services a few times, giving Sunsynk new features and capabilities. And Sunsynk has expanded massively too, so the infrastructure IONOS provides has had to evolve. But thanks to work done during the initial planning and setup phases, these upgrades have all happened with very little interruption to services.

The benefits

Incredibly easy to set up and manage

Sunsynk's solutions are managed within the IONOS Cloud, and Joel and his team use the Data Center Designer to set up and manage them. "The Data Center Designer is very user friendly compared to the equivalent tools provided by our previous hosting platform. It's much easier to put things in place, and we're able to roll out new features much more quickly, for example, it was easy to add new IoT (Internet of Things) devices into the platform recently," he said.

The data security customers expect
IONOS offers Sunsynk fantastic data security and privacy. With data centres in locations around Europe, Sunsynk is able to automatically comply with data regulations including the European GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). "The safeguard, privacy and security of data is outstanding with IONOS. They have a lot of data protection and safeguarding policies in place, which matters to us and our customers," Joel said.

Highly reliable, highly scalable infrastructure

IONOS has worked with Sunsynk to get its ideal infrastructure in place, so the systems can seamlessly adjust to the company's relentless growth in customers and data. A side effect of this has been a reduction in maintenance windows and higher systems uptime.

"Previously, when we expanded resources or needed to make system changes to improve robustness, we'd have to take down the system. But there's been much less downtime since moving to IONOS – even with all the migration work going on"

Joel Egan
Sunsynk's chief information officer (CIO)

Superior technical support

Sunsynk values IONOS for its company-wide support ethos and well-organised support teams. "Anyone can claim their support is fantastic in a sales pitch, but we've nearly been with IONOS for 12 months now, and they have delivered a fantastic service. Got problems with a database? You're passed directly to an expert, and they'll tell you within minutes what the problem is – and what you need to do to fix it. Even our account manager knows the technology and can often answer my technical questions – they employ people who've been there and done that," Joel said.

Scalability and long-term business support

IONOS goes beyond fixing issues though, offering Sunsynk the partnership and long-term business support the company needs as it expands and grows. This includes collaborating to develop and add new features and functionality when they're needed. "Hosted MongoDB wasn't ready when we first started talking to IONOS. But they promised that it would be ready when we were at the point of actually needing it, and it was. Similarly with other new requests we've put to them. They've always stuck to their promises, and they've always delivered on time," Joel said.

Conclusion

Incredibly easy to set up and manage

Migrating away from their existing hosting provider was a daunting decision for Sunsynk, but the team has no regrets about moving to the IONOS Cloud. They've now got a highly reliable, secure and competitively priced cloud infrastructure that will grow with them over the long term – and they were totally supported during their migration from their previous provider.

"For other CIOs considering new cloud options, I have only good things to say about IONOS. They're good value and I'd definitely point out their support. At the end of the day, if you've got a problem with your cloud – a remote resource – it's very hard to solve it on your own. But with IONOS, you've a 24/7 team ready to help you."

Joel Egan
Sunsynk's chief information officer (CIO)