

# PT SOLUTIONS HELPS DELIVER ENHANCED BENEFITS FOR FHT MEMBERS

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## The Background

The Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT) is one of the UK’s largest professional associations for therapists ranging in specialisms from sports and remedial therapies to complimentary healthcare and holistic beauty treatments. Founded in 1962, the FHT is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes the highest standards in education and therapy practice while remaining totally independent of any external commercial interests. With over 11,000 members, the FHT is a substantial organisation providing its members with professional accreditation, practical business support and insurance.

PT Solutions has worked with the FHT since 2007 providing a variety of IT consultancy services and support including backup, disaster recovery, email, web, network and application virtualisation solutions as well as assisting with troubleshooting general support issues related to hardware and software running on their physical network. This ongoing relationship provided the in-house IT team at the FHT with an extra level of IT assurance.

In 2018, after internal restructuring, the IT requirement changed, and the FHT’s IT service provision was outsourced to PT Solutions. Acting as their Virtual IT Department/Outsourced IT Department, PT Solutions provided a wide range of other services and support including Microsoft 365 and Azure. During the pandemic, remote working support was delivered through the provision of laptops, telephony, Microsoft 365, and Teams, so all users could work from home. In addition, PT Solutions now provides telephony system support, where the current provider falls short, assists with website development, and liaises with Microsoft Business Central development company to assist the in-house team as required.

## The Challenge

As an organisation that exists to support and promote professional standards within its industry, the FHT clearly had a requirement to ensure that its own IT systems operate as efficiently and securely as possible. With the support of PT Solutions, the FHT is in the process of redeveloping its website, improving its data integration, and streamlining its data management systems to ensure full regulatory compliance and enhanced

data security for all its members. This highly complex redevelopment has only been possible because of the close working relationship between PT Solutions and the FHT.

With a membership made up of many thousands of small, independent businesses, the FHT has been increasingly concerned that its members are vulnerable to business interruptions and costs due to IT system failures, inadequate IT security provision, a lack of IT training, and data compliance inadequacies. These issues are not unique to FHT members. They are prevalent throughout the small business community, but as an organisation with the interests of its member firmly at its heart, the FHT felt it needed to engage with the challenges facing its members and produce workable, practical, and financially viable solutions.

### The Solution

In essence, the issues facing FHT members, are exactly the same as those facing any small business. The size of the business will usually rule out employing internal IT staff and there will typically be little in the way of specific IT training. Often, the business owners will have a relatively low level of IT expertise and experience, particularly when it comes to the highly complex and often technically difficult area of IT security. Buying in external IT support can be expensive and is often brought in on a piecemeal basis as and when an issue arises.

Inevitably, this approach leads to system down-time and disruption to the business and usually overlooks the real

vulnerabilities to malicious or inadvertent security breaches and data loss. The challenge for the FHT was to address these issues in a way that was both accessible and affordable for its members.

From its research among members, it became clear to the FHT that each member needed flexible and affordable access to IT support but that they were not willing or able to address this issue adequately on their own. An organisation the size of the FHT has its own internal IT resources but these were not configured to provide the member support needed and the potential size of the requirement was way beyond its capabilities.

In discussions with PT Solutions, it became clear that a solution was possible. As a business, PT Solutions supports many smaller businesses and has developed a unique approach aimed at giving its customers exactly the kind of flexible and affordable support that the FHT wanted to deliver for its members. This approach was developed because PT Solutions recognised that smaller businesses needed access to high level IT expertise in the same way as larger businesses, they just couldn't commit to the contracts, Service Level Agreements and ongoing costs that this entailed. Equally, buying time on an ad hoc basis wasn't working for them either as they inevitably paid a higher hourly rate and had to fit in with the scheduling demands of larger customers.

The solution was to make blocks of discounted time available to smaller customers. Each block could be used up as and when required, giving the small

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business priority access to the support they needed, at affordable rates, and without any long-term contractual commitment. For many small businesses, having access to a helpdesk where a quick answer was available to help solve a small software issue or understand the root cause of a problem was invaluable. They would only be charged for the time they used, and their business could be back up and running without having to wait.

This model allowed the FHT to take advantage of the long relationship it has with PT Solutions to negotiate an IT support package that would give its member priority access to PT Solutions' helpdesk and support resources. The considerable buying power that the FHT has allowed it to offer a significant member benefit by giving them access to a special IT support arrangement whereby they can buy smaller blocks of time than would otherwise be the case. Coupled with PT Solutions' experience of working with the FHT and smaller businesses, individual members could finally have access to the level of IT expertise and support they need, in a way that really works with their business model.

In addition, PT Solutions and the FHT were able to tackle issues around the lack of training by initiating a series of basic IT skills training courses that attract Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points for members. By encouraging greater understanding and involvement in IT, the FHT was also able to demonstrate its commitment to raising awareness about the importance of cyber-security and data protection legislation among its members.

### The Result

The new FHT member support scheme is proving popular with members and the FHT alike. For the FHT, the scheme allows them to provide an additional, business-critical benefit to its members that really enhances their members' business and helps them to remain productive and secure. By offering CPD points for the training sessions it has set up, the FHT is also fulfilling its commitments to improve standards of cyber security and data protection. This further enhances the appeal of FHT membership and encourages both retention and member growth.

For members, the benefits are obvious. They have access to high level IT support at low cost and with minimal commitment. They have a path to greater expertise and awareness through the training courses and are rewarded with CPD points allowing them to maintain their professional status. They are also safe in the knowledge that the FHT has worked with PT Solutions for many years and there is an extremely high level of trust and mutual respect between the organisations.

Monica Price, CEO at the FHT commented, "It has been really exciting to be able to work with PT Solutions on putting together this highly valuable member benefit. We feel very confident in their ability to support our members. The solution helps to address one of the biggest challenges facing our members and does so in a way that is both affordable and flexible. It allows them to protect their business from some very common threats and minimises downtime caused by IT issues."

*To find out how PT Solutions could work with your business please contact us on 02380 111 844 or [info@ptslimited.co.uk](mailto:info@ptslimited.co.uk)*