



Client: SPIN

Industry: Non-profit organization

Size: More than 1,100 employees

Client Profile: SPIN (Special People in Northeast) is a leading provider of supports for children and adults with autism, intellectual and developmental disability in Greater Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley. SPIN also provides high-quality, early childhood education for children of all abilities.

CASE STUDY

Achieving Long-term IT Stability and Success with Azure Managed Services from Connection

How Azure Managed Services from Connection helped SPIN overcome IT challenges, optimize costs, and strengthen security in a resource-constrained environment.

The Challenge

SPIN, a nonprofit organization, faced significant IT challenges stemming from growing security concerns. Their nine-person IT team, led by Stephen Hopkins (IT Division Director) and Matt Creveling (IT Supervisor), was already stretched thin. A disruptive malware attack in May 2022, which impacted 80% of the workforce, highlighted the organization's vulnerabilities.

Their key challenges included:

- **Limited IT Staff:** A lean IT team struggled to find time to manage both day-to-day operations and strategic initiatives. Hiring a much-needed network administrator proved difficult due to non-profit salary constraints.
- **Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities:** The malware attack exposed gaps in SPIN's security posture. Limited endpoint protection (relying solely on Windows Defender) and underutilized Azure security features left them vulnerable.



20% cost savings on monthly consumption by optimizing VM sizing and implementing reservations



16-point increase in Microsoft Azure Advisor score (growth from 68 to 84), a metric to help users understand how well they are following best practices in their cloud environment across several categories, including cost optimization, security, reliability, operational excellence, and performance



68% savings on hiring Connection's Azure MSP vs. hiring a full-time Microsoft Azure Network Administrator*

*Based on the average salary of \$88.9K source: Zip Recruiter

The May 2022 malware attack, which encrypted critical SharePoint sites and servers, was a clear indicator of SPIN's need for enhanced security measures and a more proactive approach to IT management.

Initially, SPIN sought to address these challenges by hiring a network administrator. However, the salary constraints typical of nonprofit organizations made it difficult to attract and retain qualified candidates. When a promising candidate unexpectedly declined the offer at the last minute, SPIN realized they needed a more sustainable and cost-effective solution. This led them to turn to search for a Managed Service Provider (MSP), allowing them to access the expertise and support they needed without the challenges of hiring and retaining in-house staff.

The Solution

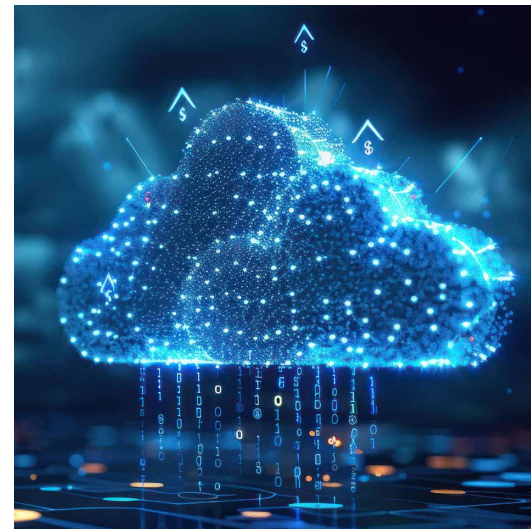
SPIN's long-standing relationship with Connection, dating back to the early 2000s as a trusted hardware vendor, made them a natural choice for an Azure MSP. Connection had previously played a pivotal role in upgrading SPIN's on-premises infrastructure and guiding its cloud migration to Azure and Microsoft 365 in 2018.

Faced with challenges while trying to hire a network administrator and the need for 24/7 IT coverage, SPIN turned to Connection for managed services solutions. This strategic decision aimed to address their immediate IT challenges and establish a foundation for long-term success.

The Azure Managed Services team at Connection implemented a multi-faceted approach to meet SPIN's needs:

- **Server Upgrades:** A seamless transition from Windows Server 2012 R2 to Windows Server 2016, ensuring compatibility, data integrity, and minimal downtime.
- **Enhanced Security:** Strengthened SPIN's security posture in the Azure cloud environment through incremental policy adjustments and the implementation of Azure Disk Encryption.
- **Extended IT Operations:** Expanded IT support from 9–5 to continuous 24/7/365 monitoring and management, providing peace of mind and proactive issue resolution.
- **Optimized Azure Costs:** By optimizing VM sizing and implementing reservations for consistently running virtual machines, they secured a significant discount on compute costs.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Established routine meetings to identify areas for improvement and ensure ongoing value delivery.

This partnership empowered SPIN to leverage Connection's expertise, address its immediate challenges, and establish a proactive IT management strategy. Regular meetings ensured that SPIN could continuously act on recommendations and optimize its IT environment.





“We’ve had a lot of services available in Azure since our migration in 2018, but we never fully utilized them, mainly due to time constraints. Having an expert to consult with and to follow up on issues has been invaluable. They’ve helped us improve our security scores within Azure and Microsoft 365 so that we’re as secure as possible. We’re making progress, not just for the sake of higher scores, but to genuinely enhance our security posture.”

Stephen Hopkins
IT Division Director
SPIN



“Anytime I have an issue that I don’t have the time to research, I’ll just pose it to Connection. They’ll do all the research and send me a very detailed summary, presenting us with the best options.”

Matt Creveling
IT Supervisor
SPIN

The Results

SPIN’s partnership with Connection yielded significant improvements across multiple areas. Through expert guidance, proactive support, and strategic optimizations, SPIN was able to achieve substantial cost savings, enhance their security posture, and streamline their IT operations.

- **Enhanced Security and Performance:** Upgrading to Windows Server 2016 introduced advanced security features and improved performance, significantly strengthening SPIN’s IT infrastructure. The in-place upgrade minimized both downtime and the need for extensive data migration.
- **Cost Savings and Operational Efficiency:** By optimizing VMs and leveraging reservations, SPIN achieved a 20% reduction in monthly Azure costs. Additionally, careful VM management ensured operational continuity without any data loss.
- **Continuous Support and Expertise:** Regular meetings with Connection’s team facilitated ongoing improvements and ensured consistent value delivery. Connection’s 24/7/365 monitoring provided comprehensive oversight and proactive issue resolution, effectively augmenting SPIN’s lean IT team and allowing them to focus on core priorities.
- **Additional Benefits:**
 - Proactive security alerts and recommendations
 - Detailed research and options presented for IT challenges
 - Assistance with Microsoft patch automation changes
 - Smooth server OS upgrades
 - Improved overall security through regular reviews

Connection’s Managed Services played a pivotal role in transforming SPIN’s IT security environment. By optimizing costs, enhancing security, and providing ongoing support, Connection enabled SPIN to focus on strategic initiatives and business growth.

The partnership with Connection has proven invaluable in mitigating risks, improving efficiency, and supporting SPIN’s journey toward a more secure and scalable cloud environment.



Are you ready to make the move to Microsoft Azure?

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