



Office 365 will help Asia Pacific expansion, says Niro Ceramic

AvantiKumar | Oct. 8, 2015

26% of SMEs in Malaysia use Office 365 for document collaboration, ahead of Google Apps and Open Office, said Microsoft's Azizah Ali.



Photo - Ian Kok, Group's Executive Director, Niro Ceramic Group.

Niro Ceramic Group is expanding throughout the Asia-Pacific region with the help of productivity and cloud solutions company Microsoft's Office 365, said the ceramic tile manufacturer, which operates in Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Spain and India.

Niro Ceramic Group's executive director Ian Kok said the group, which opened its first manufacturing plant in Switzerland in 1979, has now expanded its range of offerings the include bathroom products and widening its business scope.

"Since our beginnings, we've diversified our offerings and have gained the trust of both trade professionals and discerning home-owners in more than 100 countries globally," said Kok.

"As a result, we've had to scale our operations, and in the process, we realised that our IT systems didn't have the capacity to support our business growth. In particular, we were on the lookout for a stable and reliable communication platform that would allow us to better connect with internal and external parties," he said.

He said the previous on premise solution "imposed constraints on the business' expansion due to smaller mail boxes, limited mobile access and lacked advanced features."

IT was also struggling to cope up with increasing cost and frequent disruptions, Kok said. The traditional video conferencing systems were expensive to deploy across all locations and limited collaboration to just office conference rooms.

With this rapid expansion, information access had become a challenge for Niro's mobile business users, said Kok. The group required continuous access to data and customer information. "We found the solution in Microsoft's Office 365, which provided us the control and stability we needed when communicating with these various audiences."

Productivity is the key note

Kok said that IT partner Fedelis rolled out the solution and also got users to adopt Microsoft's Office 365 capabilities like OneDrive (cloud storage), Yammer (enterprise social networking) and Skype for Business (a voice and video collaboration tool to connect with co-workers) to drive strong communications. "We have worked closely with Niro, and are happy to find a solution befitting its needs," said Vincent Choy, senior consultant, Fedelis.



Photo - Azizah Ali, General Manager, Small and Midmarket Solutions and Partners (SMS&P), Microsoft Malaysia.

[**Azizah Ali, Microsoft Malaysia's general manager, Small and Midmarket Solutions & Partners \(/resource/management-and-careers/microsoft-malaysia-announces-return-of-senior-executive-to-management-team/\)**](#), said that Office 365 was built with productivity in mind, and that Niro's success story was exactly what Office 365 was designed for.

"Microsoft's Office 365 enables your team to work together anywhere, with the same familiar experience across PCs, tablets, and mobile devices," said Azizah. "Whether you are collaborating on important business documents, meeting with your team, or connecting with customers and partners, Microsoft uniquely offers a consistent, familiar platform for expanding the boundaries of your business."

"This is what we call reinventing productivity, and we're thrilled that organisation's such as Niro are able to leverage our business solutions to make the most of the moments that matter," she said.

A recent "Business Anywhere" SMB Survey 2015, conducted by Microsoft, noted that 26 percent of SMEs in Malaysia used Office 365 for document collaboration, and is the number one tool in its category, ahead of Google Apps for Work at 22 percent, and Open Office at 20 percent.

The same survey, which features responses from 200 SMBs from various verticals, also revealed that 43 percent of its respondents used Outlook/Exchange for email services.

"We live in an increasingly digital world, where organisations are finding new methods every day to communicate and collaborate to get their jobs done more effectively and efficiently. This in turn requires infrastructure that is cloud-enabled, with better management tools and increased efficiency for better communication. The results of this survey is proof that businesses are turning to the Cloud as an answer to their communication needs," said Azizah.

"We can expect Mobility and Cloud to play an increasingly crucial role in shaping how organisations are running their businesses," she said. "A recent APAC CIO Survey has revealed that the Cloud is no longer seen as a disruptive technology, but an essential part of every organisation's IT strategy to transform."

Niro Ceramic's Kok said, "We believe that Cloud Computing will support and complement the continued growth of Niro. With Office 365, we're able to scale as our business grows, increase productivity through 21st century collaborative tools and we can feel confident that confidential information is stored and backed-up securely."