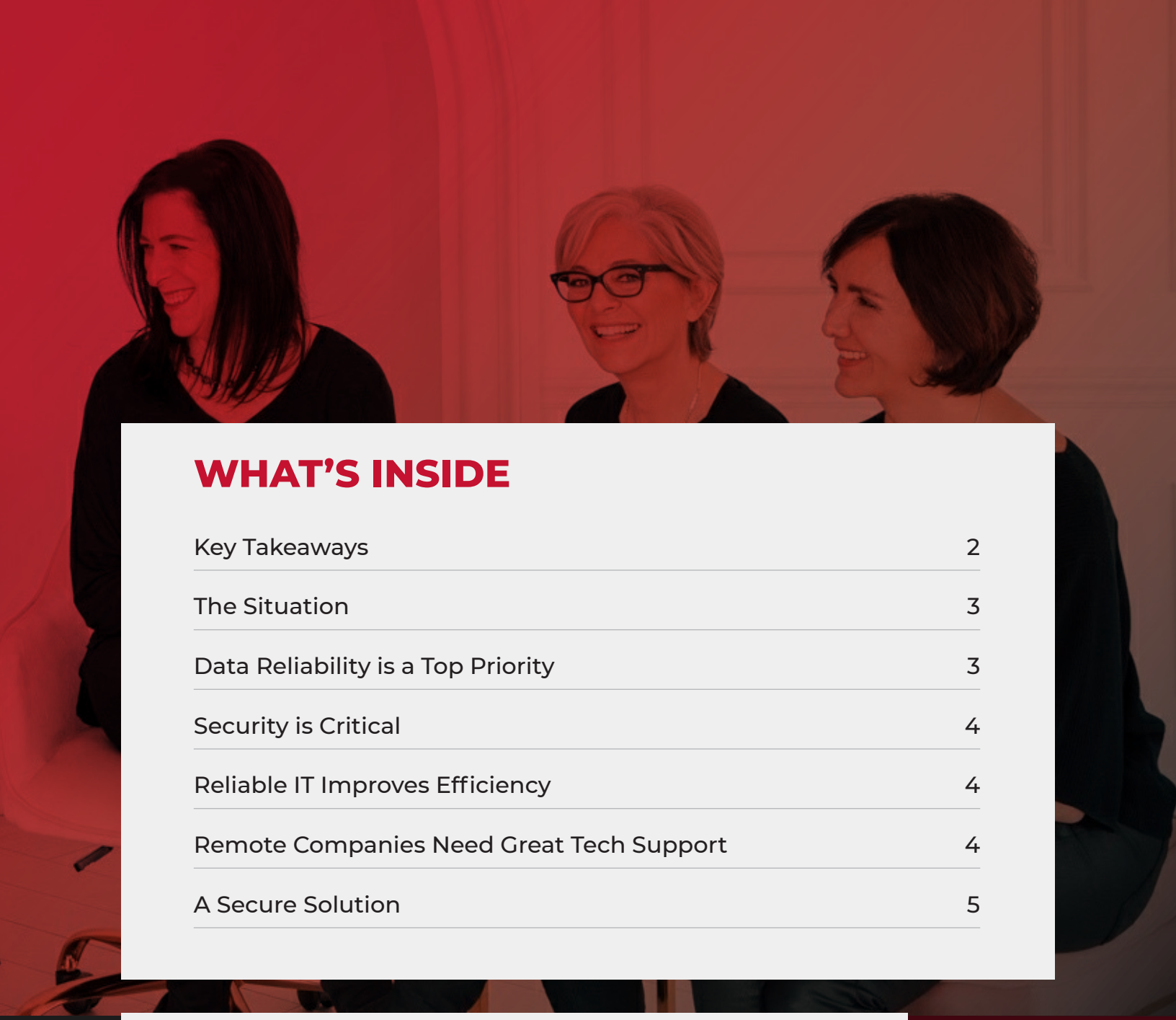
TECHNOLOGY-AS-A-SERVICE FOR SMALL BUSINESS

CASE STUDY

Rand Market Research Corp. Invests to Protect Client Data, Improve Performance

NPC™
Smarter Computing™



WHAT'S INSIDE

OVERVIEW

For Lee Rand, as president and founder of Rand Market Research Corp, securing her business and client data was a top priority. She needed superior computing performance, competent IT support, and advanced security. All while keeping her operational costs in line. She found the answer in a new model of IT service delivery – Technology-as-a-Service.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Amelia Cheston, *Research Manager*
Michele Hirak Fletcher, *Executive Director, Strategy & Insights*
Eva Blaff, *Director, Quality Assurance and Recruiting*
Lee Rand, *Founder & President*
Tamara Amar, *Director of Qualitative Research*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

With a shift to Technology-as-a-Service, RMR achieved state-of-the-art computing performance, data security, and day-to-day support that their team needed. All without having a dedicated IT department or a local provider custom build another solution. Not only did this result in IT cost savings, but from a service designed for professionals they received:

A dedicated account manager for all RMR's computing needs, which ensures simplicity and clarity in the purchase and deployment of their technology.

Reliable and knowledgeable single-point-of-contact technical support, allowing the team to deal directly with technical advisors for any computing issue for fast resolution.

Assurance that all company data is automatically backed up multiple versions deep in secure data centers. Lost files or entire systems can be easily restored.

More collaboration features and fewer tech headaches, with each member of the team using the same systems and software on fast, highly secure devices.

Automatically encrypted devices and data, bringing lower insurance premiums, bragging rights to clients about high-level data protection, and passing security questionnaires with flying colours.

The TaaS solution Lee adopted was tried and tested over more than a decade with thousands of professionals, providing bank-level security and computing performance at an affordable monthly fee for even the smallest office.

THE SITUATION

Founded by Lee Rand in 1997, Rand Market Research is a boutique market research agency providing marketing strategy and consumer insight services to top-tier clients across a wide range of industries in Canada and the U.S. As seasoned marketers and research professionals, RMR are known for their client-centred approach in providing solutions for business and marketing challenges over years of lasting relationships. Trust and high-quality results are at the core of their client acquisition and retention strategy.

To keep the company lean and the administrative team small, RMR had outsourced their IT and cybersecurity needs. After several years of IT service disappointment and a security scare, Lee knew that she needed to find a better way to ensure her company's IT reliability and cybersecurity.

RMR could spend days, or even weeks, working on an important document. Suddenly losing that document, or even an earlier version, would leave team members back at square one. Lee had thought that all their data was being backed up, that they could go back a few days and retrieve a file, but she found out that one of her most critical IT needs was not being comprehensively met. It demonstrated to her how a custom-built system — not tried and tested by thousands of users across hundreds of other companies — could make her vulnerable without even realizing it.

DATA RELIABILITY IS A TOP PRIORITY

Working with high-caliber clients — many of which appear on the Fortune 500 list — it is paramount for RMR that technical problems do not get in the way of business operations or, crucially, the protection of confidential client data. In fact, a high standard of data protection is often a requirement that RMR must meet before a client agrees to do business with them. Today, with a largely remote workforce, companies need fast and effective help with their IT. Small tech problems can have a significant impact when team members cannot share resources as easily as they could in an office. As a fully remote company, RMR needed tools that work and, if something goes wrong, a fast and reliable IT support team to help minimize downtime.

> *They had missed something — maybe switched to a different server and not brought me over. I don't know what happened, but I wasn't being backed up. That was awful. I felt so exposed.*
>
> **Lee Rand,**
> ***President and Founder,***
> ***Rand Market Research Corp***

SECURITY IS CRITICAL

Rand Market Research Corp has never had a data breach, but they have had a security scare that compelled Lee to look at other options.

For all professionals, the pressures to keep client data protected is immense. Advising a client of a lost laptop containing their confidential data, or of a cyber attack that pilfers intellectual property or work product, is the worst-case scenario for business owners.

Especially if in the aftermath they could not point to steps taken beforehand to reduce the risk. Advising clients of such loss can be a professional's most stressful experience, not to mention the financial impact. Implementing good cybersecurity practices reduces the risk of a data breach. Lee had to find an organization or method of acquiring IT where that was the default.

RELIABLE I.T. IMPROVES EFFICIENCY

A computer that is not working properly because of a hardware or software malfunction or poor configuration not only affects data security, but can also impact daily productivity as team members struggle to complete tasks and projects. At RMR, they often had to try to fix tech problem themselves because their IT support line was not always helpful. At times, the support person did not have the knowledge, experience, or tools to fix their issue effectively; when they did, it could take several hours or several calls to resolve. That is a lot of wasted time that could have gone to important work.

REMOTE COMPANIES NEED GREAT TECH SUPPORT

Tech support is especially important for companies with remote workers because small tech problems can easily disrupt a workday when co-workers are not together. It is not possible to lean over the cubicle or visit someone's office to see if they are having the same issue, or maybe work on figuring it out together. As well, home Wi-Fi can have setup and bandwidth issues causing performance and reliability issues that are easy to blame on the user's computer. Keeping people's productivity high and tech frustrations low are keys to a healthy, productive workforce in this new era of remote work.

A SECURE SOLUTION

As she started to ask around about solutions, Lee was advised by an IT consultant with experience in data security that there was a new model of service delivery that would meet her needs of improved technology performance, support, and security, in a cost-predictable model. It was called "Technology-as-a-Service" from a secure managed computing supplier called NPC DataGuard.

Traditionally, the hardware and software used to run a business safely and productively have always been custom-fit and configured. Each piece — the device, the hard drive, the amount of memory, and the level of operating system or office suite — were all individually chosen and stitched together. This method can leave lots of room for poor technical interpretation and security gaps, especially if the local IT provider does not have robust cybersecurity expertise. NPC DataGuard's secure managed computers are a standardized implementation of business-class computers. Since they are standardized, they have been performance and security tested and are designed to provide a high-performing, reliable computing experience for every user, every time.

Everything, from the operating system, Microsoft office suite, enterprise-class anti-malware, monitored and managed device security, encryption, and backup are all chosen, implemented, and configured by security professionals. With this level of standardization, extensive security testing, device monitoring, management, and support become affordable and convenient for even a single user operating on their own.

A secure computer from NPC is ready to use out of the box. Its hard drive is encrypted, comprehensive data backup to a remote site is configured and running, and military-grade security software is engaged and proactively monitoring for the latest cyber threats. As well, 24/7/365 customer support is at the ready and knowledgeable about each user and their authority to operate the device, with advanced support knowledge and tools that are already connected to the device performing diagnostics and providing repairs at lightning speed.

The expensive investment of trying to do high-level device and system security in a one-off environment is no longer an issue. Standardization allows NPC to achieve prominent levels of security for every user, exceeding compliance and regulatory requirements for a cost that could not be achieved on its own.

Lee had found her solution. Lee contacted NPC and was assigned an account manager. An assessment was completed to determine her specific needs and model choices, identify any issues or concerns she had, and a plan for the professional migration of her data from existing systems and devices. Within two weeks, she was on NPC's secure managed devices and Microsoft 365.

> *We really like it! I say 'we' because if my team is not happy, I am not going to be happy. I feel like we are all getting what we need.*

Lee and her team (without wanting to, of course) have tested NPC's promise of improved protection. One of her colleagues rushed off an airplane and accidentally left her laptop in the seat pocket. She called NPC immediately.

After confirming her identity, the NPC Security Centre disabled access to the computer and confirm that there was a full backup of the device in the data centre, that all of the intrusion prevention technologies were in place, and that everything was encrypted so that no one would be able to unlock the computer or read its data. If someone were to find it and make more than a few attempts to unlock it, it would self-destruct the data. They also began the process of pulling a new unit from inventory and loading it with the data and configurations from the remote backup.

> *I can't even begin to tell you how much more secure I feel with NPC.*

Magic! While the replacement process was underway, the airline found the computer and a happy call to the NPC Security Centre was all it took to get it unlocked and set back to the authorized user's specific credentials, and NPC called off the building of the replacement unit. None of those services were or would have been an extra charge. The difference in this experience told Lee that she had made the right decision moving to secure managed computing with NPC.

NPC cannot prevent a device from being stolen, but they can ensure that it is all the thief gets — a piece of hardware. NPC's remote device management can lock, locate, or wipe the entire computer to keep the data out of the wrong hands. On top of that, the hard drive is protected with AES 256-bit encryption, so the data would be unreadable to anyone else.

Lee and her team are grateful for big saves like this but, fortunately, those are few and far between.

Much of the value that Lee and her team get from NPC is every day increased efficiency. Having standardized virtual work environments and operating systems makes team communication and collaboration much easier. The performance of their computers can handle heavy workloads, including backup and security processes going on in the background.

When their data is backed up regularly, reliably, and securely, it is a load off Lee's mind. And her team can work with confidence that they will not lose hard-fought work that is not just important to them, but to their clients.

Equipping her team with NPC secure managed computers even lowers Lee's insurance premiums because she is taking proactive steps to protect her business from cyber threats and legal liabilities.

The 24/7/365 tech support RMR receives from NPC has been a vast improvement.

"Well, in a sense, we have all the advantages in our service delivery model," states Bill Keating, Vice-President of Technology and Operations for NPC. "While each device is uniquely secured for each user, our community of users are on standardized devices in a tested configuration we designed and built; our advanced security, diagnostic, and support tools are always at the ready. You can expect a better user experience, fewer support incidents, and shorter support times in this model."

> *Having one number to call, that each of our team members can use as required, has been a huge time saver for us,*
>
> **said Lee.**

When Lee or a member of her team calls for any sort of tech support issue, they receive expert help in an instant.

Sometimes, they need help configuring a printer or webcam. Other times, it is a more complicated problem that leads Bill and his senior technical team to work directly with vendors to sort out. Either way, Lee and her team are not left to figure it out for themselves without even knowing what questions to ask.

"We are the single-point-of-contact for everything we provide our clients. No NPC client has ever had to call a hardware vendor, Microsoft, or the anti-virus vendor. With us, there is no sorting out what it will cost to diagnose a problem or if the device is in warranty. We support everything we provide at no additional charge, and every component is always in warranty, whether covered by the OEM vendor or not," continues Bill. "Even if a device is dropped or broken, or has had a coffee poured on it, we replace it at no charge with data and applications restored on the replacement device."

It is also worth noting that NPC's first-call resolution rate for technical issues is higher than 85%, and a client's average time to connect with a representative is less than 90 seconds.

Lee is on her second round of devices and services with NPC, as all computers are renewed with the latest, state-of-the-art business-class models every three years.

The last word goes to our valued client, Lee:

> *NPC has been a big plus for us and I have been happy with my decision to go with them. When I think of the extraordinary increase in cyber attacks in the past few years and see it in the media, it is always comforting to I know I have invested in secure computing and NPC is always at work protecting my business and my clients.*

Call or write us today!

For a free consultation on how technology-as-a-service can reduce your costs and increase your security and performance.

1-855-667-2642 info@npcdataguard.com