



## Effective, bespoke solutions at Houston Group

**Modern IT isn't the Houston Group's core expertise. It relies on the external resources of CompNow to keep its high capacity server, storage and communications environment working at peak.**

# Houston.

Houston Group is one of Australia's foremost strategic and creative firms - delivering effective brand strategy, communications and considered design and creative solutions. Sydney based Houston was spun off from listed advertising group STW in 2016.

### THE CHALLENGE

Houston's creatives are sophisticated technology users and dependent on the security and throughput of the Group's ICT backbone. As a design house it has huge capacity requirements - where equipment over heating was an ongoing risk. And as an SME, the business is alert to and constrained by tight budgets.

The Group's initial Cisco-based set up was based on the recommendations of its then parent, STW. While the equipment had worked to spec, at the end of the three year agreement, ongoing maintenance costs were unaffordable.

Stacey Wren, Houston Group's Studio Manager, says "CompNow flagged that we had licenses expiring - and we would have been hit with \$20K here and \$20K there to keep going the way we were. As they helped us rethink what would best support us, we looked to go down the restructuring model."



*"We work at pace, on massive files and have heavy comms needs. We had to have a fast, easy system that didn't break down. And as a smaller business, it couldn't cost too much. CompNow always looks after our interests, at what best fits who we are and what we do."*

**Stacey Wren**  
Studio Manager  
Houston Group

## AT A GLANCE

As the licenses for its existing infrastructure were coming to an end, Houston Group took the opportunity to investigate restructuring its business critical ICT model.

### THE CHALLENGE

The key requirements for the backbone technologies of this fast paced SME were speed and reliability. And they had to be met considering both the platform's up front and ongoing expenses.

### THE SOLUTION

Implementing a HP based storage and server environment with integrated security, communications and management layers.

### THE BENEFITS

- Matched business and technology needs
- Control over budget
- Smooth transition project
- 4x speed increase
- Dedicated CompNow expert as point of contact for ongoing support

### THE PRODUCTS

- HPE DL360 servers with shared HPE MSA storage
- Aruba firewall, switches and Wi-Fi
- TPG as primary WAN and Vocus failover
- Reconfigured existing VMware

### THE SOLUTION

CompNow has a proven track record at Houston having supported the Group via a comprehensive MSA from its establishment in 2016. As Houston's de facto IT team, CompNow looks after "anything and everything" from devices to software and licenses.

The solution package proposed by CompNow – based on the HP environment – came with a five year, same business day warranty. It was designed to save Houston Group both up front expenditure and fees over time.

The decommissioning of the old equipment and migration to the new server, storage, switching, Wi-Fi and firewall environment went extremely smoothly. Not only did CompNow's procedures ensure there were no issues or no disruption to users, the first week's results proved a 4x increase in speed from client to server.

An ongoing server room overheating problem – generated by the production and up/downloading of large design assets of images and renders - was resolved as part of the upgrade project.

As part of the deployment, to ensure everyone was across the changes in the environment, CompNow documented the details of the new servers and configurations. Utilising ITGlue MSP tools, this dynamic record remains current and accurate.

CompNow excels in the details. Spare HDDs were purchased to keep one of

the existing servers in play as a failsafe "backup of a backup of a backup". All the remaining equipment was prepared and packed up to be returned to the leasing company.

### BENEFITS

"CompNow, as our technology partner, is always looking after our interests, at what best fits who we are and what we do," Stacey says.

"Modern IT isn't my core skill. I'm always learning on the job. The CompNow people patiently explain everything so we can confidently make our tech decisions.

"Re-licensing our existing environment would have hit us left, right and centre. The locked in pricing of our new environment gives us control over our bottom line."

Houston has a central point of contact at CompNow, as well as a customised dashboard. "We have a single, really knowledgeable go-to person, who knows our set up inside out backed up by ITGlue. So we're not raising tickets with multiple people or wasting time tracking jobs," she says.

"The way Houston operates is that we create effective, bespoke solutions for our clients that are driven by proven frameworks for change. We're proud of our reputation as a talented, efficient team that delivers – on every job, no matter how big or small.

"It's so good to have a relationship coming from CompNow that absolutely fits with who we are. CompNow is a great supplier - credit where credit's due," Stacey says.

