

## A better path for app development



**A titan of New Zealand industry uses Azure App Foundry to take its innovative security solutions to the SME and consumer markets.**

Since the 1930s, when Bill Gallagher Senior pioneered the electric fence to keep farm animals safely in their paddocks, Gallagher Group has been one of New Zealand's most innovative companies.

From its Hamilton headquarters, Gallagher now exports animal management, security, fuel systems and contract manufacturing solutions all over the world, employing over 1,000 people in the process.

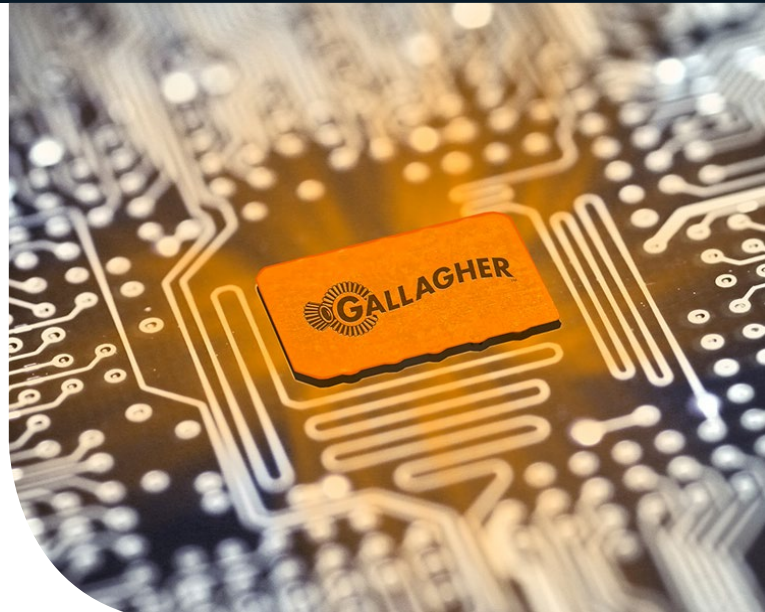
Typically working with enterprise customers, Gallagher saw an opportunity to offer its cloud-based building security and access management to smaller businesses. To do so it needed an online platform to interface with its enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and connect customers as well as a network of security solution installers.

"There were really two things we wanted," says Gallagher Group Chief Information Officer, Neville Richardson.

"We needed to be able to go to market quickly, to get something out there, test it with customers and installers and iterate based on the feedback," explains Neville.

"We also wanted a system that complemented our existing enterprise architecture rather than duplicating aspects of it."

With a pre-existing relationship with Intergen stretching back ten years, Neville knew exactly who to talk to. His enquiries led him to Azure App Foundry, Intergen's app development platform that marries the cost-efficiencies, security and scale of cloud-based platforms and off-the-shelf third-party apps, with the flexibility and customisation potential of bespoke home-grown software.



With Azure App Foundry, Neville and the Gallagher team were able to leverage off Microsoft Azure tools and frameworks to quickly develop a minimum viable product (MVP) to allow it to work with a network of installers taking its security solutions to new markets.

"The great thing about App Foundry is that you aren't starting from scratch," says Nick Hadlee, Intergen's Practice Manager Digital, Data & AI.

"The building blocks are already there and Intergen's DevOps and software engineering expertise can be employed to help you get a product up and running quickly."

In Gallagher's case, that involved developing a partners' portal for the installers based on the SiteCore content management system (CMS) and e-commerce platform. With a digital-first approach in mind, it required an app suitable for mobile devices and full integration with Gallagher's SAP ERP system.

For Neville, the use of App Foundry proved highly effective in allowing Gallagher to open a new sales channel with a low-code solution that leveraged off the company's existing IT systems.

"In addition to using App Foundry, when we needed to have those in-depth discussions around enterprise architecture, the Intergen team was there for us," says Neville.

The combination of App Foundry and the support from Intergen's team allowed an MVP of the portal to be built for a third of the cost of other solutions Gallagher considered.

"We were delivering things in nine months that would have taken twice as long and cost three times the money to deliver with a monolithic system," says Neville.

The Flexibility of App Foundry also meant that Gallagher was able to pursue its small business application as it also developed its long-term e-commerce strategy.

The result is a partner portal that is simple to use and allows transactions to be completed entirely online.

"This is a solution play, there are a few elements to that and we wanted to make purchasing security solutions as easy as buying toothpaste on Amazon," says Neville.

The iterative aspect of development possible with App Foundry also means that Gallagher is able to draw on feedback from users to change or add features and functionality. That feedback had allowed Gallagher to refine the system to better facilitate access control and video camera integration.

Using SiteCore, Gallagher was, for the first time, able to measure every aspect of the customer journey.

"We know when people aren't signing up, we know where there's a problem with the installer experience," says Neville.

"The end to end view gives us those actionable insights. We can focus on what needs resolving and not sweat the other stuff."

The next step will be to provide additional features Gallagher's customers and installers have been asking for, to extend the portal to new geographic regions, and integrate it with the company's overall e-commerce strategy.

Neville also sees opportunities to work with the Azure cloud-based artificial intelligence and machine learning tools to deliver more value to customers.

"We are not a huge business in terms of headcount. To deal with the large amount of customer data we work with we will increasingly need to use machine learning to automate those process steps," he says.

"We also want to put insights from our security solutions in the hands of users themselves."

For Nick Hadlee, the Gallagher project is just the start of its App Foundry journey as the company has the ability to draw on the platform as part of a continuous evolution of its new digital offering.

"App Foundry wraps around their enterprise architecture and Gallagher can take ownership of it and extend its functionality in-house," he says.

"With the investment we've made in Azure App Foundry, we are well placed to help other organisations do the same and realise the benefits in cost savings and rapid deployment."

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**Neville Richardson**  
CIO, Gallagher Group

## SNAPSHOT

- Azure App Foundry allowed Gallagher to move from concept to working partner portal serving new markets in less than 12 months
- The use of SiteCore lets Gallagher, for the first time, track every aspect of the customer journey and offer actionable feedback
- Gallagher's App Foundry-based portal was created for a third of the cost of other solutions it was presented with, which would have taken longer to develop and deploy
- The platform allows Gallagher to quickly add new features based on its e-commerce strategy and feedback from partners and customers

