



rackspace

Rackspace Customer Story – Charity

Supporting the British Heart Foundation to beat heartbreak forever

Rackspace migrated the charity's web infrastructure to Microsoft Azure and transformed the role of technology within the organisation to help accelerate its ambition to beat heartbreak forever.

Our customer

The British Heart Foundation is the largest independent funder of research into heart and circulatory diseases in the UK. Its focus is on turning discoveries into life saving medical advances to save and improve lives. The charity relies on individual supporters' contributions, as well as its online and in-store retail business, to fund around £100 million of research each year into heart and circulatory diseases; the world's biggest killers. As part of its ambitious strategy to 2030, the charity aims to beat heartbreak forever.

How we helped

The British Heart Foundation embarked on a strategic partnership with Rackspace to migrate its infrastructure to Microsoft Azure. This gave the charity a scalable and reliable platform to handle the increased website traffic needed to support its ambitious goal to beat heartbreak forever. Working with Rackspace Professional Services, it has a true partner that operates as an extension of its team, working collaboratively to transform its infrastructure and do more with technology across the organisation.

The obstacles they faced

The charity's website was increasingly becoming the core platform for engaging with its stakeholders, donors, patients, and carers. However, the site lacked the reliability and stability required, and was not set up to grow with the British Heart Foundation's ambitions.

What we achieved together

The British Heart Foundation's website is now fit for purpose and future-proofed to deliver the charity's plans and goals. The migration has provided the foundation to accelerate towards its 2030 strategy, handling increased traffic from campaigns, giving donors an improved experience, and providing a solid base on which to grow its online retail business. Through the collaborative partnership, Rackspace has helped the British Heart Foundation transform the role technology plays within the organisation to drive its culture, operations, and broader strategy forward.



British Heart Foundation



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Amit Patel
Head of Enterprise Architecture
The British Heart Foundation

Accelerating the mission to beat heartbreak forever through technology

The British Heart Foundation is the largest independent funder of research into heart and circulatory diseases in the UK. Voluntary contributions account for 80 per cent of its revenue, totalling £136.4 million in 2017-2018. It also operates over 700 stores across the UK as well as an online store, collecting, sorting, and selling second-hand goods to further its fundraising efforts.

“The British Heart Foundation is a special place,” said Mary O’Callaghan, Director of

Technology Engagement at British Heart Foundation. “Over the last 50 years, UK deaths from heart and circulation diseases have fallen by half, but to bring them down even further we need to be constantly innovating, looking at new ways to use data and patient insights. To help achieve this we need to increase our funding, not just in the UK, but globally too.”

The charity knew it needed a better technology infrastructure to support these ambitious goals. Its website has become increasingly important for delivering on the promise of its mission for 2030, with its online retail business, fundraising campaigns, and acting as a source of information for

all stakeholders. Working with Rackspace, the British Heart Foundation migrated to Microsoft Azure, giving it a platform that is both reliable and scalable.

A platform to support life-saving research

As much as 80 per cent of the charity’s income comes from voluntary contributions, of which just over 60 per cent is legacies. The rest comes from a variety of fundraising sources, including community activities, events, major gifts, and mass participation events. Increasingly, these fundraising efforts rely on the British Heart Foundation’s website

to promote and provide information, as well as acting as a donations channel itself.

“The website was fit for purpose around six to eight years ago,” explained Amit Patel, head of enterprise architecture at the British Heart Foundation. “But more recently it has struggled to scale up as needed. We’ve seen massive growth in digital donations and sign-ups. For instance, our London to Brighton Bike Ride is a major annual event, and all of its information and fundraising is processed through the website. We see a major peak in online traffic during this time, and we’ve had issues in the past with the website slowing down, grinding to a halt, or even crashing,

which hampers the user experience and can hinder people from supporting us.”

The charity realised that in order to grow and meet its targets, it needed a platform that had the reliability and scalability to support it. After establishing exactly what it needed, the British Heart Foundation appointed Rackspace as a strategic partner through a procurement exercise and Microsoft Azure was selected as the cloud platform for its reliability and Platform as a Service offering.

“We’ve been working with Microsoft directly over the past two years but didn’t have the capability to migrate to and run Azure in-house. Rackspace provided expertise and experience with Azure, as well as collaboratively working as an extension of our team to make sure everything was exactly how we wanted it to be,” said Amit.

“We chose Azure because we could design a scalable, reliable base, and were interested in its Platform as a Service offering.”

A true partnership

As well as wanting a scalable base to grow its fundraising activity, the British Heart Foundation also needed the platform to be available every minute of the day, with support in case something went wrong in the middle of the night. Moving to the cloud gave the charity the resilience, failover, and backup it was looking for. It also needed a true partner to help it every step of the way.

“In the past our website has been provided by suppliers, but we needed something more to deliver on our strategy to 2030,” said Mary. “Rackspace provided the technical knowledge and expertise, but the Professional Services team also gave us advice, support, and guidance on the right ways to deploy cloud. Our IT set up is moving from being a service provider to a core part of how we achieve our objectives, and that requires a different



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Head of Enterprise Architecture
The British Heart Foundation

mindset from both the wider business and the team itself. Working with Rackspace, we can learn from its culture and how it delivers innovation.”

The migration kicked off in October 2018 and was completed in April 2019. Throughout the process, the website stayed online without a minute of downtime, with Rackspace and the British Heart Foundation taking a staged approach across multiple teams to ensure the transition was as smooth as possible.

With Rackspace operating as an extension of the British Heart Foundation team, the technology services company offered the type of partnership the charity needed. “We had a number of challenges with our previous set up, particularly around database sizing and supporting our content management system. Rackspace brought a lot of knowledge, which we simply wouldn’t have been able to get on our own. It has really opened its doors to us and worked as a partner, not simply a service provider,” said Amit.

A foundation for today and tomorrow

Since the migration, both Mary and Amit feel the entire business is responding differently to the website. “There’s a much more relaxed attitude towards the website,” said Amit. “In the past, there had been concerns over whether certain campaigns would break it. After the move to Azure, we ran a campaign on dementia. Traffic was significantly up, but we didn’t encounter any of the issues across the site that we had in the past. We’re going to be pushing a lot more traffic through it in the coming months and years, and we’re reassured it will be able to perform optimally.”

The modern platform has not only provided the foundation for the British Heart

Foundation’s 2030 strategy but has already proved valuable in attracting the talent that will help them deliver it. “We’ve now got an industry-leading platform, which makes it easier to attract and retain the talent we need to make our ambitions a reality. It’s the first time we’ve had IT and digital working together, with Rackspace as a guide. That sets up all sorts of possibilities of what we might achieve in the future,” said Mary.

“People are going to be going more digital and we need to be with them. We’re looking at Platform as a Service with Rackspace, which will help us be more agile, more scalable, more stable. It’s ongoing, and it’s the way we can best use technology to reach our targets.”

Amit Patel, Head of Enterprise Architecture
The British Heart Foundation

Looking to the future

The migration was always about providing a future-proofed platform to support the British Heart Foundation and its 2030 strategy. Now it is in place, the website is opening up new possibilities the internal IT team couldn’t have previously considered. “Having this new, expandable platform, which can access all the tools Azure supports, is helping us think of new ways of helping patients via digital technologies. At the same time, it’s unlocking innovative approaches to fundraising and revenue generation,” said Mary.

And while the new site is reliable and scalable, the charity knows it is just the first step in order to keep in line with technological advances. “People are going to be going more digital and we need to be with them. We’re looking at Platform as a Service with Rackspace, which will help us be more agile, more scalable, more stable. It’s ongoing, and it’s the way we can best use technology to reach our targets,” said Amit.

About Rackspace

At Rackspace, we accelerate the value of the cloud during every phase of digital transformation. By managing apps, data, security and multiple clouds, we are the best choice to help customers get to the cloud, innovate with new technologies and maximise their IT investments. As a recognised Gartner Magic Quadrant leader, we are uniquely positioned to close the gap between the complex reality of today and the promise of tomorrow. Passionate about customer success, we provide unbiased expertise, based on proven results, across all the leading technologies. And across every interaction worldwide, we deliver Fanatical Experience™ — the best customer service experience in the industry. Rackspace has been honoured within the top 100 Great Places to Work for more than a decade.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com

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