



Node4 helped Loans2Go with a **modernised IT infrastructure and database** to help its move to a fully operational online lender, in support of **GDPR regulations**.

Customer

Loans2Go

Industry

Financial Services

Size

100+ employees

The solution

Full monitoring and 24x7 proactive management of critical Microsoft SQL environments



GDPR compliant with data managed in the UK



Uninterrupted service



24x7 proactive management of critical environments



Gave a personal touch

“As a lean IT team, it's great being able to bounce ideas off other skilled professionals and have them feel like an extension of our team because they truly care.”

The Customer

Loans2Go is the trading name of Loans 2 Go Ltd. Established over 20yrs ago, Loans2Go is an industry leader in the provision of alternative, affordable personal loans. Following a merger with Logbook Loans, Loans2Go has experienced substantial growth and continues to develop innovative approaches to lending, customer service and account management. The company provides loans with flexible terms for those seeking to find an alternative to more traditional forms of credit.

The Challenge

Loans2Go started as a high-street lender but has successfully transitioned to fully online operations. As part of that journey, it was paramount to modernise the company's IT infrastructure so that it could compete with other digital players. The same is true of the company's infrastructure and processes when it comes to data platform management.

The organisation was using bespoke systems running on old IBM mainframes designed by a related company based in the US. The DBAs supporting the systems were part of this company. Over time the systems were migrated over to MSSQL, but still supported by the US until new stricter rules under GDPR were announced. It was agreed that DBA support should move to the UK to mitigate any compliance issues.

Loans2Go runs a small IT and development team, and whilst it was clear that it needed a skilled resource to maintain and optimise the database environment, the cost of hiring a dedicated team of DBAs was prohibitive.

In addition to this, the environment needed urgent optimisation as the company was missing out on business opportunities due to the time-sensitive nature of the online acquisition process. If the system could respond quicker to the circa 40,000 daily applications, this would increase the volume of acquisitions.

The Solution

Given the need for database managed services in the UK, the team started reaching out to various companies, eventually coming to Node4.

James Godbold, CIO at Loans2Go, said: "From the off, we wanted to work with a provider that could offer not only the technical expertise but the great support model that we needed. When we spoke with Node4, we knew they would go further than just the base-level requirements and help us with additional critical consultancy."

Loans2Go decided to take a suite of solutions from Node4 to address the challenges of its legacy infrastructure, which includes full monitoring and 24*7 proactive management of the critical Microsoft SQL environments.

The onboarding process was seamless: "I was chased pretty constantly by Node4 to make sure I was sticking to deadlines that were imposed," said James. "I work with so many suppliers that come up with a project timeline, and it's normally me chasing them! The fact that Node4 were on it, hitting deadlines and remaining transparent with good communication was a great start to our working relationship and a promising sign in my opinion."

The relationship began with Node4 conducting a full review of the current infrastructure and highlighting areas which needed improvement. These were listed out clearly and concisely along with a severity grading. A plan was put together, and work began to remediate the issues. Node4 was also tasked with identifying bottlenecks within the environment. The team at Node4 was able to pinpoint several problem queries along with remediation tips, which included query re-writes and the careful placement of new indexes.

Node4 was also instrumental in helping Loans2Go overhaul and migrate its environment. This included solution design and testing. One of the key points that emerged from this was the identification of a severe bottleneck on the new infrastructure, which, had it gone unnoticed would have had severe consequences for the business.

"The Node4 team reported a problem to Loans2Go following their testing — it turned out the new kit was performing far worse than the old kit, which was 10 years old," said James. "They told us not to migrate until we fixed the bottleneck and once we checked it out further with the help of Node4, we discovered that the kit that had been supplied to us couldn't handle the IOPs required by the SQL Server databases needed to operate effectively."

Subsequently, Loans2Go was able to procure suitable hardware with the support and advice of Node4 and finally migrated after a crucial Node4 sign-off. The company has now migrated safely, without disturbing customer data and mitigated the huge cost of the new kit failing once purchased.

The Result

The benefits of working with Node4 reach beyond the technical, as Loans2Go is able to rely on the Node4 team as an extension of its own with a common shared goal. This has created a positive environment for futureproofing IT operations.

"What has stood out about Node4 the most is that we were looking for a company that gave more of a personal touch," said James. "While other companies may have just stuck some monitoring on servers and automated high-level alerts, with Node4, they will proactively investigate issues and raise up personally."

"As a lean IT team, it's great being able to bounce ideas off other skilled professionals and have them feel like an extension of our team because they truly care. The last thing any IT team wants to do is have their line of engagement be through a faceless call centre and have to speak with someone who is reading off scripts and constantly escalating to someone who knows more."

Another benefit of working with Node4 is that Loans2Go can reap flexibility. "Larger suppliers mean work becomes siloed. With Node4, we get flexibility and great communication," James explained. "Our data centre migration has been bumped three or four times due to priorities shifting and the infrastructure issues, and Node4 has been very accommodating with that. The team understands the complications with projects, and have gone above and beyond what they are actually committed to do to help us reach a shared goal."

"The way we onboard customers is through an auction panel and response time is critical to this. Without quick responses, we lose custom. It is that simple. The old environment was seeing performance degradation, and because of this, we were not responding to the bids within the 30-second time frame. The speed of our infrastructure is vital; otherwise, we miss out on huge amounts of opportunity. We are now completing the process in sub-five seconds, whereas before we had huge fluctuations between 10 and 40 seconds. With Node4 testing the new environment and finding the flaws, we've also averted moving to kit that wouldn't have been able to respond quick enough either."

"Loans2Go has changed significantly from a high-street lender to almost exclusively online, and as such, it is battling against companies that have initiated themselves as a fintech company. The transition is always harder than building something from scratch, but having good partners makes a huge difference. Knowing we have the right expertise to move this forward is something we value deeply."

Loans2Go is now looking to build out new DR sites and expand into cloud solutions with the help of Node4's data management and infrastructure expertise.