

## Case Study

# How The Virtual IT Department builds an automated future for Australia's micro businesses

## Overview

The Virtual IT Department began as a small, family-run MSP founded by John Cromie to support the aged care and disability businesses of Australia. As the business grew, it became more challenging to scale operations while maintaining profitability. When John's daughter, Anna Furlong, Executive Director, and her husband, Liam Furlong, Product Director, took over, they committed to modernizing an organization that needed a new strategy to sustain growth in a changing market.

Unlike many Australian MSPs that relied on offshoring to cut costs, The Virtual IT Department prioritized sovereign labor, securing high-value, security conscious contracts. However, this decision meant they needed to find alternative ways to scale while maintaining compliance and preserving margins. At the same time, they recognized an untapped market—1.5 million micro businesses struggling to access IT services under traditional MSP pricing models.

Guiding this transformation from a strategic perspective, Liam and Anna focused on redefining the company's growth strategy. At the same time, Lachlan Messner, Senior Project Engineer, played a pivotal role in executing automation



THE VIRTUAL •IT DEPARTMENT

initiatives. Lachlan led the development of workflows that eliminated inefficiencies, streamlined operations, and freed technicians to focus on high-value work. Adopting an automation-first strategy with Rewst at its core, they built a scalable service model that allowed them to grow without adding headcount.

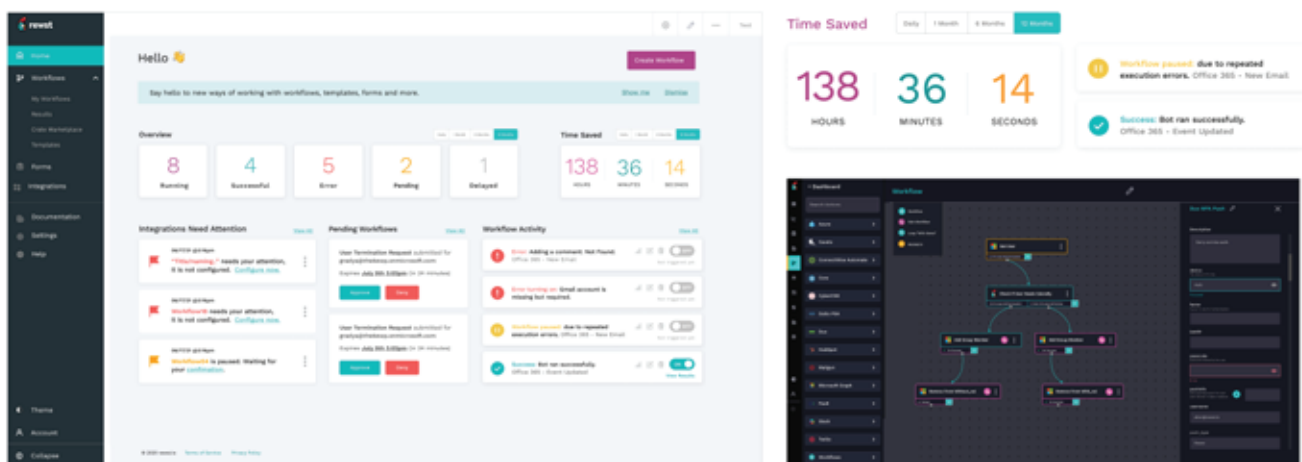
Now, they are pushing automation even further by developing a fully automated customer portal with Rewst's App Builder. Underpinned by Rewst automations, this portal will allow micro businesses to sign up, onboard, and manage IT services intentionally without technician involvement.

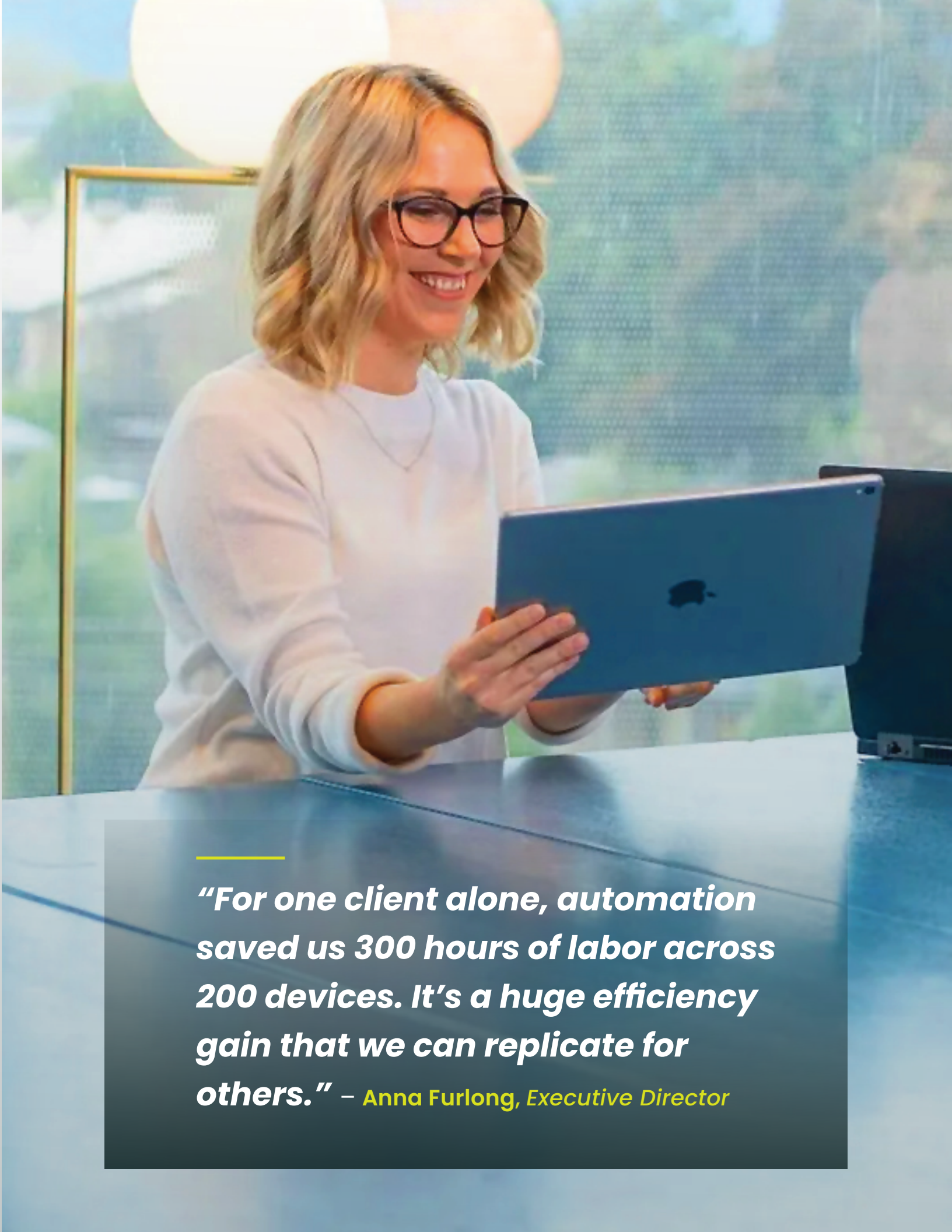
This case study explores The Virtual IT Department's transformation through leadership and engineering perspectives, demonstrating how automation has driven its evolution from a business constrained by scalability challenges to an MSP leading innovation in the Australian market.

## The MSP problem no one solved: Serving micro businesses profitably

As The Virtual IT Department grew, it faced increasing pressure to scale efficiently while maintaining compliance and profitability. Traditional MSP strategies relied on hiring more staff to meet demand, but this approach quickly eroded margins. Many MSPs addressed this challenge by offshoring jobs, but The Virtual IT Department's commitment to sovereign labor made this route infeasible. While securing government-funded contracts reinforced their business model, it also required them to find new ways to remain competitive.

Beyond internal constraints, they saw an opportunity to serve an untapped market—micro businesses that need IT services but can't afford traditional MSP pricing. Existing service models weren't





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***“For one client alone, automation saved us 300 hours of labor across 200 devices. It’s a huge efficiency gain that we can replicate for others.” – Anna Furlong, Executive Director***

built for these customers, making it unprofitable for most MSPs to support them.

At the operational level, inefficiencies made scaling even more difficult. Client onboarding alone consumed upwards of 40 hours of technician time per month, creating bottlenecks that limited their ability to take on new clients. Expanding the team to resolve these inefficiencies would only drive up costs, reinforcing the need for a scalable solution.

They had to fundamentally change how they delivered IT services to grow without increasing overhead costs. They sought an automation platform to streamline processes, reduce technician workloads, and create a scalable model for their existing and future clients. Their search led them to Rewst.

## Scaling smarter: How Rewst supports The Virtual IT Department's long-term goals

Finding the right automation platform meant more than just reducing technician workloads—it was about building a foundation for long-term growth. The Virtual IT Department needed a solution that fit their processes and culture, not one that forced them to adapt to rigid limitations. Rewst provided the flexibility they sought, enabling them to automate on their terms while controlling how workflows were structured and deployed.

For The Virtual IT Department, automation

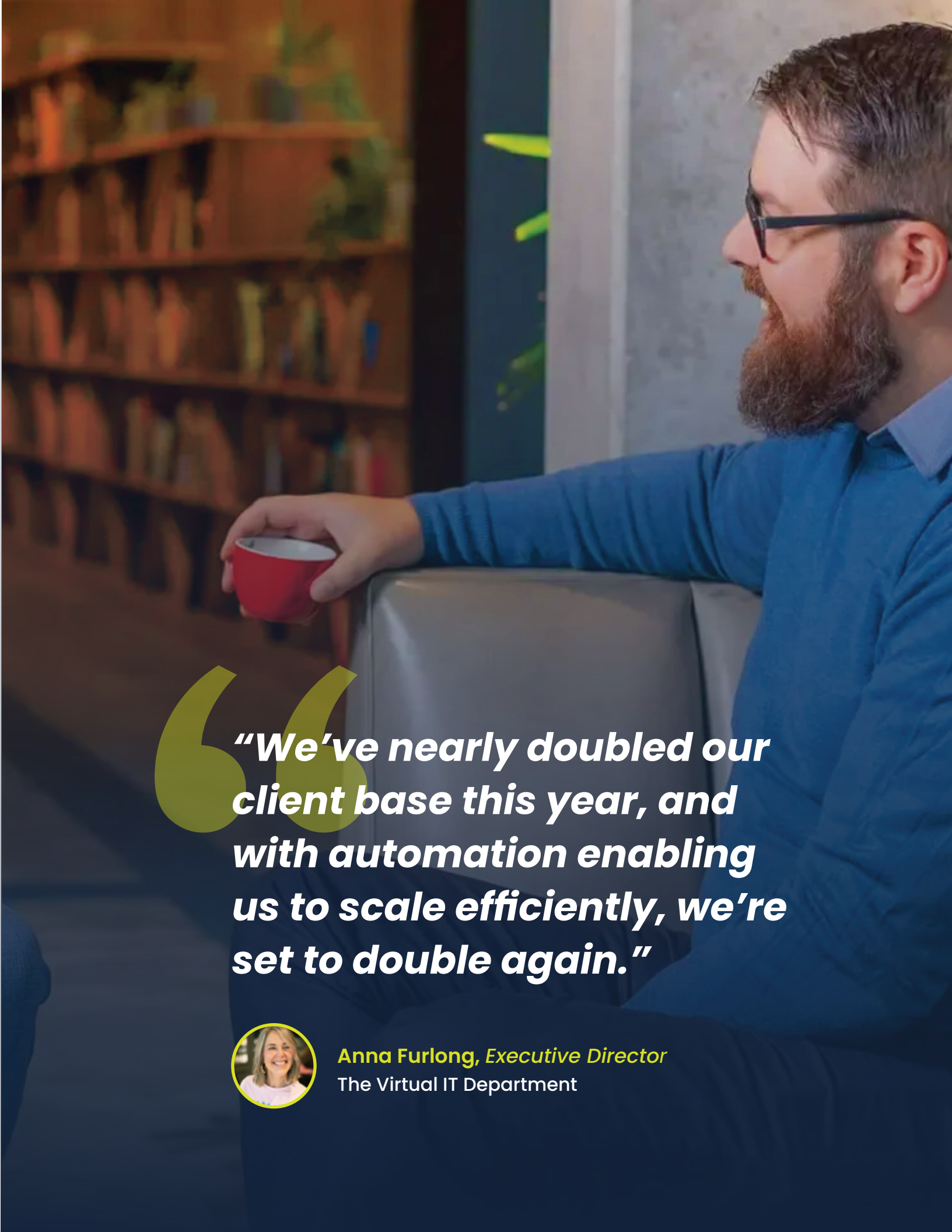
was the key to serving clients in new ways. Their vision extended beyond streamlining back-end operations. They wanted to build an entirely new approach to IT service delivery. Rewst's API-driven capabilities aligned with this goal, allowing them to develop a fully automated provisioning system to eliminate manual intervention in client onboarding and ongoing service management.

Unlike other automation platforms focused solely on technician efficiency, The Virtual IT Department saw Rewst as a way to enhance the client experience. With the flexibility to create self-service options, they built a portal where customers could submit requests and access IT services without waiting on a technician, opening new levels of responsiveness and efficiency.

The Virtual IT Department also valued Rewst's ability to support incremental automation. Rather than implementing a disruptive overhaul, they took a measured approach, rolling out high-impact workflows first and refining them over time. This strategy ensured immediate ROI while maintaining stability as they scaled.

Beyond the technology itself, Rewst resonated with The Virtual IT Department's problem-solving culture. Automation wasn't just a necessity—it was a creative tool their team embraced. "We don't adopt tools lightly," said Anna Furlong. "Rewst fit our approach because we prefer a light footprint to manage our environment securely and get the most out of our tools."





***“We’ve nearly doubled our client base this year, and with automation enabling us to scale efficiently, we’re set to double again.”***



***Anna Furlong, Executive Director***  
The Virtual IT Department

Rewst's adaptability gave them the freedom to experiment, refine, and push the boundaries of what automation could achieve, reinforcing their commitment to building a scalable and future-ready MSP model.

## A new MSP model: Leveraging automation to break the limits of scalability

With Rewst, The Virtual IT Department built the automation-driven service model they needed to scale efficiently while maintaining compliance and expanding into new markets. Automation became the driving force behind their transformation, allowing them to eliminate manual processes, optimize technician workloads, and unlock new revenue streams.

One of their most impactful initiatives focused on automating client onboarding. Previously, the process took 40 hours of technician time each month, requiring manual data entry, provisioning, and multiple technician touchpoints. This bottleneck slowed their ability to take on new clients and diverted resources from higher-priority work.

With Rewst, they built an automated onboarding workflow that standardized processes and eliminated redundant steps. What once took days was reduced to 2–3 hours, freeing technicians to focus on proactive client support and high-value initiatives.

Beyond onboarding, The Virtual IT Department leveraged Rewst to automate critical workflows like user provisioning, system integrations, and compliance-driven reporting. By removing the burden of repetitive tasks, they optimized technician productivity while maintaining the high service standards required for sovereign data driven contracts.

Their automation strategy took a measured, incremental approach, allowing them to scale while maintaining stability. Lachlan Messner worked two days per week on automation development, reinforcing their minimum viable product (MVP) strategy—rolling out high-impact workflows first, refining them over time, and continuously improving automation performance.

Lachlan had limited experience with JavaScript, HTML, and CSS, yet successfully built and customized Rewst workflows to meet The Virtual IT Department's needs. His ability to develop automation solutions with minimal coding expertise showed how Rewst made automation accessible, allowing them to tailor processes without relying on external developers.

Rewst also empowered them to tap into new market segments, particularly micro-businesses historically underserved due to high service costs. By automating key service functions, they developed an efficient and scalable model that allowed them to serve this market profitably.

The Virtual IT Department built processes tailored to their specific needs through

customized workflows rather than conforming to a rigid system. As a result, they eliminated operational bottlenecks and preserved profitability. They positioned themselves as an MSP innovator in the Australian market, proving that an automation-first strategy could drive both efficiency and business growth.

## Results

Rewst transformed The Virtual IT Department's operations, delivering measurable and impactful improvements:

### Increased efficiency

By automating high-impact tasks like client onboarding, The Virtual IT Department followed a minimum viable product (MVP) approach to cut technician time from 40 hours per month to just 2–3 hours, saving 450+ hours annually. Automation also shaved 5–10 minutes off each helpdesk task, compounding into major time savings.

### Cost savings

Eliminating repetitive manual work saved \$50,000–\$60,000 annually by reducing the need for additional hires. Beyond onboarding, Rewst automated device migrations from Active Directory to Intune achieving a 90% success rate, saving 300+ technician hours for a single client.

### Enhanced compliance

Automation enabled The IT Department to maintain 100% sovereign labor compliance, allowing them to secure government funded contracts while maintaining a competitive compliance edge against offshore-reliant MSPs.

### New market access

With automation at its foundation, The Virtual IT Department began unlocking 1.5 million micro businesses in Australia that had been traditionally underserved due to high service costs. Building a self-service portal with Rewst's App Builder enables clients to submit service requests and access IT functions without technician involvement. This automation-first model positioned them to expand into micro-businesses efficiently, unlocking a new market segment that traditional MSPs found unprofitable.

### Scalability & business growth

Automation fueled record-breaking business growth, enabling The IT Department to double its client base in a year and remain on track to double again. They're now building a fully automated client onboarding system, positioning them for long-term scalability and hands-free customer sign-ups. This vision guarantees sustainable growth while preserving operational control.

Rewst empowered The Virtual IT Department to achieve these results, modernize operations, and position itself as a leader in the Australian MSP market.

## Automating the future: A seamless IT portal for micro businesses

The Virtual IT Department continues to push the boundaries of automation, using Rewst's App Builder to develop a fully automated customer portal designed to redefine how micro businesses access IT services. The portal delivers an intuitive, e-commerce-style experience, allowing businesses to sign up, onboard, and manage their IT needs without technician involvement.

Serving micro businesses profitably has long been an unsolved challenge for MSPs. The Virtual IT Department's automated portal eliminates the manual labor traditionally required in service delivery. By automating policy package setup, security compliance, and system integrations, they are pioneering a model that enables sustainable, technician-free IT management at scale.

The portal dynamically updates based on organization context and user permissions, ensuring clients only see the services and

forms relevant to them. Integrating cached JSON variables optimizes real-time automation without pulling live data, reducing load times and creating a seamless experience.

To streamline operations further, they will embed billing functions directly into HaloPSA, ensuring seamless cost tracking and invoicing for their team and clients.

*"This isn't just about automation," said Lachlan Messner. "It's about creating a service model that allows businesses to manage their IT environments efficiently, without the traditional roadblocks."*

By leading this transformation, The Virtual IT Department is proving that automation isn't just a tool—it's the foundation for modern IT service delivery. Through Rewst, they are setting a new standard for efficiency, scalability, and profitability in the MSP industry, demonstrating that innovation and growth go hand in hand when automation is at the core of a business strategy.

**Are you ready to connect your  
tools and unlock greater efficiency,  
consistency, and client satisfaction?**

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