time regained

Harcourts Astute Paddington are a fast-growing agency in Queensland. But to sustain their growth, they needed property management software that helped them cut down on admin.

business built to scale

Harcourts Astute in Paddington, Queensland, grew their rent roll from just 18 properties to more than 300 in 2019. But to sustain that growth, Principal PJ Salami knew he would need to change how properties were managed, to become more efficient.

The team were using Gateway which, while rich in trust accounting and property management features, is server-based. Gateway is designed for maximum utility.

Console Cloud, on the other hand, is designed for radical productivity. It's designed to help businesses scale. And to keep growing his business, PJ would need to choose property management software that helped his team work smarter—not harder.

After migrating to Console Cloud, it's a completely different story. Here's how Console Cloud helped Harcourts Astute to cut down on manual labour, raise the bar for customer service, and create a better work-life balance for the whole team.

growing pains

Across the nation, agencies are struggling to break through the 500 properties under management barrier. Part of the struggle with scaling the business has to do with the efficiency of property management tasks, combined with a tighter market for commissions, and meeting higher expectations of landlords.

Harcourts Astute was not immune to this struggle.

"Gone are the days where someone would just come in and choose a property management agency. Now, investors want that relationship dealing with industry experts. It's most people's major assets you're dealing with, and for the fees charged, they want quality and up to date information."

—PJ SALAMI

After discussions with Console's training and implementation specialists, Harcourts Astute Paddington realised Console Cloud could help them with that goal. Staff could work flexibly, and drive the productivity gains needed to take on significantly more properties. They made the decision to upgrade.

The migration + support process

From start to finish, the implementation process took about a week—at which point, PJ Salami's staff were operating at full capacity again.

"It took two business days to migrate our data, and a week to be fully functional again. Sometimes you hear about other companies migrating data multiple times. But from Gateway to Console Cloud, they migrated our data in one shot." **P S**

Since Harcourt Astute Paddington's migration in 2018, our migrations have gotten even faster. Now, Console migrates property management data overnight. Businesses that have followed their migration plans can expect to be productive in Console Cloud in just a couple of business days.

As with any migration, there's always going to be some uncertainty about using a new system. But that's where Console's customer service team really shine. "In my experience, the biggest issues with any change is what happens when you ask for help. But the support [from Console's service specialists] when we made the change from Gateway to Console Cloud made it so much easier. It was fantastic."

Life on Console Cloud

Now that his staff have adapted to Console Cloud, they really are seeing incredible gains, well beyond the flexibility to work anywhere. Harcourts Astute Paddington are getting the most out of their Console Cloud subscription: using workflows, document storage, the Console App, and Console Pay.

Principal PJ Salami estimates this has helped them cut down the time spent on manual tasks by as much as 40-45%. That translates to nearly half of a property manager's average working day.

Here's how they did it.

They made use of workflows

Lease Renewals

Lease renewals are one of the most efficient drivers of revenue in property management, so it makes sense to optimise the process as much as possible. One time-consuming task involved in renewing a lease is calling landlords and tenants to identify their intentions.

Once a lease is 12 weeks from expiry in Console Cloud, it triggers the lease renewal workflow and asks the property manager if they'd like to send a text or email asking for the relevant parties' intentions. This gives both parties buttons to click which say 'renew', 'vacate', and 'undecided'.

What is a workflow?

One of the key features of Console Cloud is its unique and unparalleled workflows. Workflows turn time-consuming tasks into a series of quick clicks. They're triggered by events like compliance expiration dates, a tenant falling into arrears, a lease expiring—and so on.

Workflows are used to manage time-consuming tasks that were previously managed using checklists and spreadsheets, such as rental arrears, maintenance requests, lease renewals, vacates, tenant onboarding, and compliance. Instead of waiting for a property manager to identify the next task that needs doing in a process, workflows:

- notify property managers of arrears, expiring smoke alarms, new requests for maintenance etc.
- provide all the right information needed to make a decision (such as tenant payment history, including how many times they've been in arrears before)
- automate some actions
- provide guidance on what other actions still need to be taken and
- record actions on a visual timeline.

Console Cloud updates their respective intentions in real time. On average, 70% of contacts indicate their intention via this method, and on average, within 68 hours.

"Once upon a time, we did lease renewals in an Excel spreadsheet, and it used to be a mess. Now, everything you need to know is in the same tab.

"Once we migrated, we let Console Cloud get everyone's renewal intentions, and let it streamline the process for us. A big chunk of admin has now been removed, without compromising the control our property managers have over the process." **PS**

Arrears

Every agency has to deal with arrears. But with Console Cloud, both the time spent managing arrears, and the time tenants spend in arrears is shrinking for Harcourts Astute Paddington.

For agencies in Console Cloud, the average time to close out arrears dropped from 9 days (across all tenants) to 4.27 days for clients once they started using the arrears workflow. And when they enabled the auto SMS feature? That figure dropped to 3 days.

Harcourts Astute Paddington made full use of the arrears workflow, including setting up automated SMS.

"Forget the old method of a phone call from the office landline or text message out of Gateway. Besides the manual process, property managers would dread these calls because tenants would be upset, or demand the last six years of their tenant ledger to be sent to them. It was draining, and it was time-consuming.

Now it's a set and forget method. Our tenants are receiving automated messages that are far more detailed, and they remove all the arguments and excuses. As a result, arrears are down, and so is the time spent managing them. Arrears manages itself." **PS**

They use the Console App

Harcourts Astute Paddington uses the Console App to manage routine, entry, and exit inspections. Besides being easier to use and more robust than other inspection apps, the app offers several key advantages.

"The Console App lets you store unlimited photos, and the image quality is always at the same resolution as your phone takes it. Plus, it lets you log maintenance jobs on site. It also gives you the flexibility to add rooms as you like, which are customisable to the property.

And finally, you don't need to wait until you're back in the office to close out the inspection and send owners a report. You can send it to them on the spot, and that shows them they're your top priority." **PS**

They activated Console Pay

Harcourts Astute Paddington set up Console Pay in Console Cloud and on-boarded tenants. That was all there was for them to do. Once it was set up, says PJ, Console Pay pretty much took care of the rest.

"Everyone that uses Console Pay has their payments automatically matched so that receipting is simply a mouse click to do. It's easily saved us around 80% of our receipting time each morning, because Console Pay tenants take maybe 2 minutes total to process."

Time regained: providing superior service that scales

With 45% more time in their day, property managers now have a real capacity to invest in building relationships with landlords and tenants, and finding new business.

"Property managers once had to spend so much time on the phone dealing with things like arrears and maintenance requests. And that didn't leave much time for talking to clients on the phone. Now, we can call and ask 'How are we doing? Do you have any feedback for us?'

That superior customer experience and efficiency sets Harcourts Astute Paddington ahead of the rest. This is a successful agency proving that reducing the admin load doesn't have to reduce the revenue—in fact, quite the opposite. They're a business built to scale.

"If I was to give any advice, it would be that if you choose Console Cloud, you'll be saving money and time, and you're maximising efficiency without working up a sweat. Plus, your staff will love it too. Tell me which business owner wouldn't want to do these things?" P S

Is it time to migrate your property management agency to Console Cloud? Book a demo to see what we can do for your business.

BOOK A DEMO

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Email **sales@console.com.au**

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