

## Executive insight: Andy Caddy, Group CIO, Virgin Active



Andy Caddy is Group CIO of Virgin Active, prior to which he was CTO of easyJet. He will be bringing this wealth of experience in the travel, retail, and health and leisure sectors, to Cloud World Forum at the Olympia, London on 24-25 June, where he will be presenting a keynote session about the opportunities that IoT presents to the CIO. We caught up with him to chat about his experience and to capture his thoughts on the latest industry trends, including the specific challenges and opportunities of his industry, the benefits of Cloud and the Internet of Things, some of the most successful projects he's worked on, and his view of the industry in

2015.

As Andy himself says, the health and fitness sector is an interesting one, given that 5 years ago, people could open, operate and change health clubs without any technology. However, this has changed immensely; there has been a seismic shift, to the point where technology is in almost everything that we do, and in what the health and fitness sector does. Technology has been a disruptor and an innovator. So for the CIO of the world's leading health club operator, the challenge is how to provide members with the services they have come to expect. As Andy puts it, "I think that's something as an industry we don't do as well as we should do. Historically we brought people in, got them to join and gave them a bit of love at the beginning of their relationship and then we kind of let them go their own way, and then they leave, and that is the business of running health clubs. And we can do better with that, we can do better with that by being more relevant and engaging".

**"I think the real challenge for us is how to be relevant and engaging, using the technology we have available today to meet our members' needs".**

We put it to Andy that customers are more discerning and demanding these days, and he agrees that people expect to have a more engaging experience, as that's something that they've seen in other industries. "They expect to have the tools and facilities available to them that they have on their phones", and as an industry, the health and fitness sector has a bit of work to do to meet those expectations.

Looking at his career to date, we wonder what he would consider to be his greatest project, and what factors made it such a success. In Andy's view, the really great projects are those that have the biggest business impact; the ones that can be well-contained, and that "you can explain in 20 seconds what the project was there to do, and how it did it". One such example was when he was at easyJet, and launched the mobile easyJet app, which gave a fantastic experience for the team and their customers. At first there was some scepticism over whether people would share their credit card details in-app, but by the time he left a year after launch, it was a £100m channel, so it was an amazing experience, and really met a customer need.

A project that he is currently working on, is the rollout of a fitness ERP system and membership management system. The aim of it is business process change that happens to deliver a business systems implementation rather than the other way around. It's been rewarding to work closely with the UK management and operations teams to ensure that the product to be rolled out can effectively make that change, building a foundation within Virgin Active that can be built on in the future.

**"To me, projects that have the biggest business impact are really the great projects, the ones that can be well-contained and you can explain in 20 seconds what the project was there to do and how it did it"**

Business process and change management are near the top of the agenda for many enterprises, in all kinds of sectors, and another hot topic is the Internet of Things. IoT has played a major part in the programme for Cloud World Forum 2015, and only looks to be growing. As Andy rightly says, the health and fitness sector has been at the forefront of this growth, and there are already use cases of where IoT technology is working for this sector. But it's not just the technology that's working for the industry; it's

also working for consumers: “in our industry, seeing people getting fitter and healthier through the use of trackers and tracking devices has been interesting. It’s been a good thing to watch”.

The product development cycle has also been interesting for Andy, given that in the space of a few years, you’ve gone from devices entering the market, to the market becoming essentially saturated. So the disruptor could do with being disrupted to get to the next stage of development.

Having said that, there is still a question over what to do with the data produced by these devices. The potential of this opportunity is exciting, and the companies that may thrive most from this content are the ones most able to build a picture of a consumer from how they use technology, but we’re in the early days of realising that potential. As Andy puts it: “I know [in one day] how many steps I took, or I know what sleep I had, or my heart rate. But if I can start to accumulate that over a long period of time that’s a really interesting problem to solve: what are those trends, what does it show you, how does it affect your life?”.

**“I’m much more interested in the data that this stuff throws up and what you do with it than I am with the devices”**

Thinking ahead to Cloud World Forum, we wonder what Andy is most looking forward to from the event and what he’s hoping to get out of it. Firstly he rightly suggests that Cloud has been an accepted medium (although he’s still surprised to meet people who are resistant to it), so perhaps we should be looking at evolving the event name. But the idea behind his attendance is that the event gets a good set of people, there are good networking opportunities and good companies. “I get to come to two or three events a year, take yourself out of the day job and get out there, that’s what I look forward to. And there are good speakers at Cloud World Forum, so it’s a good opportunity to hear their insights and real-world experience”.

You can join Andy at [Cloud World Forum](#), and take advantage of all the knowledge and network opportunities presented by EMEA’s only content-led Cloud exhibition. [Visit the event website to book your place.](#)