

CASE STUDY

Online retailer

Cloud migration helps high street retailer transition into a fully digital business model

Overview

As the economy has changed in recent years, many high street brands have developed their digital presence to meet the changing needs of both suppliers and consumers. One household name in particular recently retired their physical stores in order to pivot to a fully digital operation. It now operates exclusively online and through resellers, managing orders centrally. But to achieve this, they needed to focus on building a scalable, cloud-based solution to support their new operating model.

Situation

The transition from a traditional high street retailer to a fully digital business model meant they needed the level of IT infrastructure that could support their new business model. This meant a complete modernisation of their existing legacy IT environment, which was hosted in dated on-premises servers. To add to the challenge, their previous infrastructure was complex and hosted an abundance of obsolete applications and antiquated versions of essential software.

Staff numbers were also going to be reduced with the closing of their physical stores. As a result, it was important that the reduced workforce was equipped with streamlined IT services that enabled them to work remotely, with the right technical support in place to mitigate downtime.

They needed outside help to achieve their goals of modernising operations and migrating to a cloud first approach, all while maintaining business continuity. This meant finding a partner able to:

- Update their legacy infrastructure by managing the transition from on-premises data centres and applications that were critical to past operations but no longer fit for purpose.
- Improve scalability and flexibility by ensuring IT systems could support the retailer's digital business strategy, allowing for rapid scaling and adaptability to meet new demands.
- Deliver cost effectiveness by shifting to an operational expenditure (OpEx)-based model to avoid large capital expenditures while mitigating waste and unnecessary expenditure.
- Enable remote working by empowering the workforce to operate flexibly, without being tied to outdated telecom models or physical office infrastructure.
- Provide expert guidance by navigating the complex migration process with limited internal IT resources and ensuring seamless integration of new systems.



Solution

Having identified Wavenet as the best fit partner for what they needed, we began the process of defining, then delivering a comprehensive, flexible, and scalable solution. Thanks to OnDemand: Azure, the retailer had access to our expert guidance and adaptable support tailored to their evolving needs.

Key elements of the solution included:

Modernisation and transition to cloud

- **Migrating to Microsoft Azure**

We transitioned their on-premises data centres into Microsoft Azure, creating a robust cloud environment for the retailer's core infrastructure and applications.

- **Management of legacy systems**

Their essential legacy applications were either migrated into the cloud, or archived. This ensured continuity, while reducing their dependence on their outdated infrastructure. It also meant their obsolete applications were recoverable if needed for audit purposes.

- **Delivery of infrastructure services and landing zones**

We established new cloud environments, delivering critical components like data storage, system protection and identity management.

Professional services and expert support

- **Collaborative planning and phased implementation**

Our OnDemand: Azure Change Squad worked closely with the retailer's IT team and third party vendors to assess requirements, plan the migration, and implement solutions in manageable, phased steps. Temporary platforms were created for seamless data migration and the Change Squad delivered a test and develop approach to ensure robust systems were deployed into production.

- **Ongoing post-deployment support**

Our OnDemand: Azure Run Squad specialists provide ongoing managed services, reconfiguring and optimising the cloud environment as the retailer's operational needs grow and change.

Where larger changes have been required, the Run Squad has re-engaged with the Change Squad to ensure the Azure environment continues to be inline with the required business model.

Connectivity and networking

- **Delivery of core networking services**

We provide resilient Microsoft ExpressRoute circuits for secure and reliable connectivity between the retailer's offices and their cloud environment.

- **Connectivity between key sites**

Our high performance network ensures staff at the retailer's warehouses, offices and critical hubs enjoy seamless connectivity to enable reliable communication and data flow.

Cost effective and flexible delivery

- **Flexible and scalable delivery**

Our OnDemand: Azure model allows the retailer to maximise their return on investment by only paying for the services and resources they need at any given time. This means avoiding up front capital expenditures, while eliminating lengthy and cumbersome contract terms. This highly scalable approach means they can make the most of their IT budget and achieve internal budget approval more easily.

Enabling remote working

- **Remote, centralised access**

The new cloud infrastructure would allow colleagues to access their data and applications from any location.

- **Security and identity management**

Robust security and identity authentication measures were introduced so that no sensitive information is compromised at the cost of convenience.

Results

Today, the retailer successfully operates a fully digital business, enabled by the future-ready, cloud first infrastructure that we have tailored to their needs.

Key benefits include:

- **Rapid rollout**

Our scalable resources allowed the retailer to meet ambitious timelines, expediting the initial transition without compromising on quality or availability of services.

- **Cost savings**

By leveraging OnDemand: Azure, the retailer only paid for the resources they needed when they needed them, eliminating waste and reducing overall IT expenditure. This OpEx-based model simplified internal budget approvals and provided a clear return on investment.

- **Enhanced adaptiveness**

The new cloud infrastructure allows the retailer to scale IT operations up or down as their business needs evolve, ensuring they are always equipped to handle demand without overcommitting resources.

- **Better connectivity**

Robust networking solutions using ExpressRoute circuits ensure reliable, high performance connectivity across the retailer's offices, warehouses and other remaining locations.

- **Enablement of remote and hybrid working**

Employees can now access systems securely from anywhere, fostering collaboration and flexibility, without compromising sensitive data.

- **Minimised downtime**

With 99.9% uptime and rapid-response teams ready to address any issues, the retailer enjoys peace of mind and uninterrupted operations.

Ian Phillips, Solutions Architect at Wavenet, said: "The transition from legacy systems to a modern, cloud first infrastructure was seamless. Our OnDemand: Azure approach meant that the customer was able to scale resource in line with their business needs. For example, we ramped up capacity during the initial rollout, helping them meet their own ambitious timelines; then we scaled it back during quieter periods to ensure they never paid for more than they needed.

"It's rewarding to see how our expertise continues to play a role in supporting their multi-vendor strategy and long-term success. They're ready to face whatever challenges the future has in store with the confidence that we'll be here to support them."



Our OnDemand: Azure model gives the customer peace of mind, as they knew that even though they were taking the business into what they saw as unknown territories, they had us – a team of industry leading specialists – ready to adapt with them. Our services and support would change with their needs, so that they were never caught short-handed and could evidence return on investment and value for money at every stage of the process.

Ian Phillips

Solution Architect at Wavenet

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