

CASE STUDY

PREMIER FOODS BOOSTS FLEXIBILITY AFTER CDW ORCHESTRATES MIGRATION TO AWS PUBLIC CLOUD.

OVERVIEW

- Premier Foods wanted to move to a more adaptable and efficient cloud services platform for their core business
- CDW developed a strategic roadmap for public cloud migration via its own multi-tier cloud assessment service, CloudPlan® delivering fast, accurate insight into cost savings and flexibility
- Following analysis, a business case and implementation plan for migration to Amazon Web Services (AWS) was developed
- Migration activities are now underway, with full implementation of the public cloud solution to be completed by January 2021

ABOUT PREMIER FOODS

- Premier Foods plc, established in 1976 is a British food manufacturer and listed on the London Stock Exchange.
- The group owns and produces many well-known food brands including Mr Kipling, Ambrosia, Angel Delight, Sharwoods, Lloyd Grossman sauces, Bisto and Batchelors, as well as manufacturing cakes under the Cadbury's brand by license
- Has a workforce of over **4,000** employees and annual turnover of **£824.3m**

CHALLENGE

Premier Foods is a British food manufacturer that owns and produces well-known brands including Mr Kipling, Ambrosia, Sharwoods and Lloyd Grossman sauces. The organisation wanted to explore alternatives to the existing data centre infrastructure in place for its core business operations and at one of its subsidiary businesses Knighton Foods which specialises in the production of powdered food products – putting in place a more flexible and cost-efficient method for delivering services to its IT users. Migration to the public cloud was under consideration, but the organisation needed a clear view of available options and associated costs. CDW was selected to investigate potential solutions and deliver a proof of concept for the infrastructure.

“We could see the benefits of public cloud but needed a technology solutions provider who could demonstrate deep technical knowledge, along with a structured approach to migration that would ensure business continuity,” says Gareth Byrne-Perkins, Head of Technology and Services at Premier Foods. “CDW showed that it had a complete understanding of public cloud solutions, combined with a clear roadmap to get us where we needed to be. That gave us the confidence that migration could be performed smoothly without any disruption.”

SOLUTION

CDW introduced its own multi-tier cloud assessment service, CloudPlan® to Premier Foods as a strategic methodology and toolset for the assessment of current and future cloud requirements. This included an analysis of the existing data centre environment, comprising more than 200 servers, followed by a comparison of the technical and commercial attributes of various cloud service providers. Following analysis of options during a series of workshops, CDW recommended a migration to Amazon Web Services (AWS), underpinned by CDW managed services. The recommendation was based on the potential for significant cost savings and the ability to scale infrastructure provision up and down, according to the changing requirements of Premier Foods' business, adjusting monthly fees at any given time. This flexibility would future-proof Premier Foods' IT operations, providing much-needed scalability.



MIGRATION

During the assessment phase, CDW conducted an audit of Premier Foods' IT estate, helping it compile a full list of servers, workloads and applications that would require migration to the cloud. This process enabled CDW to produce detailed dependency mapping – effectively working out how Premier Foods' IT assets were interlinked and understanding how the migration of one asset might affect the performance of another. The dependency mapping was compiled into a detailed technical report and then presented to the customer with context to provide a clear roadmap for the suggested approach to migration.

"Dependency mapping is a central tenet of CDW's approach to public cloud migration. It helps us and the customer understand the complexities involved in future migration approaches, taking in to account inter-dependencies between servers and applications, traffic flow and latency. These are crucial factors when considering how multiple servers are migrated, often across large distances depending on the source and target datacentre and/or public cloud service providers" says Carl Lawton, Director, Cloud Services & R&D at CDW.

The assessment service also enabled CDW to identify which areas of Premier Foods' infrastructure was suitable for public cloud migration, and which would remain better placed on-premises. Certain assets, it was found, were tied to historical licensing agreements, meaning that it made more sense to migrate them at a later stage once the customer had realised the full value of its existing licence. After detailed analysis was undertaken by CDW, cloud specialists then established a detailed roadmap for migration based on individual batches,

“ CDW's people are empowered to make decisions, without stalling or delay, and that has delivered an agile and adaptive migration process to AWS public cloud that has so far lived up to all of our expectations. ”

– Gareth Byrne-Perkins, Head of Technology and Services at Premier Foods



integrating the workflows into a broader project management framework. "It was a very collaborative process," says Carl Lawton. "Premier Foods knew its server and application estate better than we did, but we had better public cloud design capabilities. So, it was a case of working closely together to carry out the assessment and design stages as a unified process."

CloudPlan® identified a total of 160 workloads to be migrated over to the new AWS public cloud environment out of the overall scope of servers. In addition, CDW contracted specialist consultant Lemongrass to manage the migration of Premier Foods' SAP infrastructure. A detailed platform design was produced, covering areas such as account structure, security provisions and billing, along with technical characteristics such as network infrastructure, tagging strategies, monitoring and analytics. "At all times we worked with the customer to ensure they were happy with how the AWS account was set up in line with the AWS Well-Architected Framework, and – crucially – how it would benefit them in the future," Carl Lawton says.

The migration activity has now commenced, with the process due for completion by the end of the year. The work has gone smoothly, so far, with no technical issues. "The complexity on a migration project like this comes from working with multiple, third-party vendors, as well as the evolving nature of the customer estate," says Carl

Lawton. "Premier Foods had seen a boom in business in the first half of this year, and so it was been scaling up operations just as we were starting to conduct the migration process. It was a fast-paced environment; therefore, our team has had to respond in an agile manner to those changing circumstances."

For Gareth Byrne-Perkins, Head of Technology and Services at Premier Foods, the migration process has been exceptionally well communicated, resulting in the smooth transition to-date. "There was never any doubt in my mind that CDW knew how to replicate a data centre in a public cloud environment," he says. "What has impressed me, though, is the collaborative nature of the migration process. We have a small IT team with a big voice, and CDW has always been happy to take on our views and adapt accordingly. CDW's people are empowered to make decisions, without stalling or delay, and that has delivered an agile and adaptive migration process to AWS public cloud that has so far lived up to all of our expectations."

Specifically, Gareth Byrne-Perkins has been impressed by the structured nature of the migration activities. "Whether it is Windows, SQL, SAP or end-user Citrix workloads – we have always had a strategic roadmap of what is happening, and when. That clear approach to migration, using identified batches, means we can ensure business continuity at all times."

OUTCOME

Once migration is completed and Premier Foods starts to realise the full benefit of the AWS environment, it can expect to enjoy several significant advantages. The new cloud services will deliver an immediate reduction in operating costs, amounting to several thousand pounds a month, enabling the organisation to invest those savings in innovation projects that add value. Premier Foods will also benefit from an enhanced level of enterprise support, at no extra cost, delivered through an arrangement with CDW. Premier Foods also gains access to a CDW account manager and highly accredited solutions architects who along with a service delivery manager, make monthly on-site visits to help it keep pace with AWS innovations.

In the longer term, future benefits will deliver new levels of automation in cloud services, resulting in rapid agility. "If Premier Foods sees business peaks and troughs, it's easy to automate the

AWS environment to scale up or down, whereas previously it would have had to spend many hours reconfiguring workloads," says Carl Lawton. "AWS has an ever-evolving range of tools, so the customer will also have access to hundreds of other services that will allow it to explore the art of the possible. Premier Foods has global expansion plans in countries like the US, and AWS will allow it to deploy rapidly and with no capital expenditure, enabling it to scale the business without difficulty."

That scalability is an essential factor for Gareth Byrne-Perkins at Premier Foods. He intends to use AWS as the foundation for future projects as part of a more extensive plan for digital transformation. "The level of tools within AWS is incredible," he says. "We plan to use the public cloud as a means of helping us to improve and extend our manufacturing capabilities in areas such as the Internet of Things. Once migration is over the line,

there will be so much more we can do to increase innovation while at the same driving down costs."

“ The level of tools within AWS is incredible. ”

–Gareth Byrne-Perkins, Head of Technology and Services at Premier Foods

To learn more about AWS solutions provided by CDW, please contact your Account Manager or email CloudEnquiries@uk.cdw.com.

