

Move from legacy to AWS elevates online shopping experience within months

CLIENT

This iconic British retail brand has 240 department stores in 22 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Australia, while customers in more than 90 countries buy from its online store. It is one of the top five fashion retailers in the UK, with a unique mix of own brands, international brands and concessions.

CHALLENGE

The brand's rich history and reputation for quality was forged through its dominant high street presence. But it faces intense competition from new market entrants exploiting digital technologies, omnichannel marketing and product strategies to provide a seamless and constantly evolving shopping experience for customers, both in-store and online.

It recognized that its legacy IT infrastructure was preventing it from competing with omnichannel retailers. It was unable to respond quickly enough to opportunities and there was a mismatch between its in-store and online shopping experiences.

The Head of Customer Systems said: "The retail industry is constantly changing, driven by new trends, seasons and supply. With our legacy server infrastructure, it took months to make front-end website changes and, consequently, our online customers weren't receiving the same high-quality experience as our in-store shoppers.

"People know us as a cherished retail high street brand - but the future is multi-channel. We want to drive online growth, provide a real online shopping experience, not just a marketplace, and offer customers more flexibility and choice."

In response, the new IT strategy aims to give it the control, speed, agility, and scalability to compete online, meet its loyal customers' expectations, and win new customers too. To achieve its vision, the brand was looking for a partner with the mix of technical and management skills to guide it on its journey.

HIGHLIGHTS

CLIENT

An iconic British retail brand

CHALLENGE

Retail brand needed to modernize its IT environment to enable it to compete with the speed and agility of today's leading omnichannel retailers.

MARKET CHALLENGE

The retail industry is facing increasing online sales volumes and customer complexity in terms of right product, timing and pricing, while dealing with multi-country regulatory compliance such as GDPR.

SOLUTION

Cloud Transformation on AWS

RESULTS

- A successful transition to AWS in just seven months
- Online changes, updates and enhancements now achievable within hours
- An immersive, service-led online shopping experience

SOLUTION

The retailer selected Ensono to help implement a cloud-first strategy, in which business-critical applications would be migrated from expensive legacy server architecture to Amazon Web Services (AWS).

Its ultimate destination is a highly flexible microservices-led environment, with its teams moving quickly to take advantage of emerging commercial opportunities and to deliver an enhanced online customer experience.

With Ensono's support, it is replacing all of its legacy IBM WebSphere architecture over the next two years. The initial migration of assets to AWS is complete and the partners are now working to build in-house IT skills, so that its teams can take their own direct action.

The Head of Customer Systems explained, "Ensono's project delivery has been excellent, giving us trust and confidence that we have the right long-term partner for our journey. Initial estimates said the migration to AWS would take 12 months, but Ensono's tight and well executed program got the job done in just seven months.

"Ensono provided excellent thought-leadership - for example the migration of our database, which was a real challenge. Taking the database offline for long was not possible, so it came up with a great solution which de-risked the project. In the end, the database was offline for just seven hours."

RESULTS

Following the migration, the retailer is now running its online operations at a third of the cost of its legacy system and is re-investing savings into its retail technology and services.

It can distribute updates, launch new promotions, ranges, products, and services and resolve issues in hours instead of weeks or months, and as its new microservices ecosystem takes shape, customers will be able to enjoy the immersive, service-led online experience of the unique brand.

"This digital transformation is as much about changing mindsets as it is about improving IT. We're still at the start of our journey to a microservices ecosystem, so it's great to work with a partner which can not only deliver a successful migration but also help us to embrace this organization-wide change.

"We're impressed by Ensono - it offers us the thought-leadership, innovation and expertise we need to implement real business change," concluded the Head of Customer Systems.