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Engineering a Risk Free Transition to the Cloud

Partnering with Hamilton Rentals enables this managed cloud services provider to execute a challenging swing migration of its client's legacy applications and mission-critical workloads to an enterprise cloud environment – without missing a beat.

Implementing a swing hardware strategy with Hamilton Rentals minimises wasted hardware, keeps costs in control – and eliminates any risk of service outages.

Background:

Minimising risk and downtime

Migrating legacy applications and mission-critical enterprise workloads to the cloud is never an easy task. Especially when you're dealing with large non-heterogeneous environments that feature complex networking.

That was exactly the challenge facing this provider of managed cloud infrastructure services as it prepared to engineer a migration strategy that would enable a new customer to transition successfully to its Enterprise Cloud solution.

Initiating a straightforward 'lift and shift' operation wasn't an option.

Having recently undertaken a major acquisition programme, the customer needed to merge and integrate two different IT infrastructures.

Which meant the cloud services company faced consolidating two data centres operating two different platforms – SAP and Oracle Unix – and unifying all software and hardware into a new SAP environment hosted in its cloud. An additional complicating factor was that the Oracle Unix platform was running on legacy hardware.

To limit the impact of multiple migrations, the cloud company needed to adopt a swing approach that would enable it to temporarily duplicate the Oracle environment. Alongside assuring the reduced risk of service outages, this would ensure that critical applications and data would always be available as systems were transferred and 'rebuilt' in the cloud.

"Containing costs while eliminating any risk of down time or data loss was mission critical for our customer's business. We needed to take a risk-balanced approach to this uniquely complex migration - ensuring that bullet-proof DR capabilities were built into the entire process," explains the Client Solutions Executive EMEA at the cloud services company.

To help it design and facilitate the 'rent and replace' strategy that would support the phased migration and modernisation of its customer's complex environment, the global cloud services provider turned to Hamilton Rentals.

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The requirement:

Creating a parallel environment

The task facing Hamilton Rentals was a complex one: replicating the Oracle legacy kit and enabling a real time production duplication of the hardware, together with a DR solution that could be spun up immediately if needed.

To create the parallel environment, Hamilton Rentals first mapped, patched and undertook Solaris administration tasks on the 14 rental servers that would be deployed. Prior to installation at the UK data centre, Hamilton completed site surveys to ensure the racking of the servers was undertaken with maximum efficiency and identified any work that needed to be prioritised.

In addition to creating a live server production environment, Hamilton was also responsible for the provision and installation of 178 TB of SAS storage along with enterprise switches.

Once installed and live, Hamilton provided 24x7 maintenance cover on all hardware to ensure the temporary environment was always available to ensure 100% contingency cover for the duration of the migration process itself.

After the complex migration process had been completed, Hamilton decommissioned all hardware and undertook all on-site data erasure to CESG standards to ensure the information security of the end-customer was not compromised.

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The solution:

An end-to-end approach

Minimising any need for CAPEX outlay, Hamilton's team of experts were able to replicate the complex environment in preparation for the phased migration of the data centre to the new cloud environment.

In addition to providing the critical 'swing' kit that would be required to assure the availability of critical applications and data as the data centre migration project progressed, Hamilton Rentals took care of all licensing on the rental equipment and engineered the full implementation of a live production environment that exactly matched that of the customer.

All of which left the managed cloud services provider free to focus on managing the phased consolidation and transition of the customer's production environments to a cloud hosted SAP offering.

"Hamilton Rentals enabled us to leverage a double-take availability approach that would give our customer exceptional application and data protection throughout the migration process," confirms the Client Solutions Executive EMEA.

"Working alongside our teams, Hamilton Rentals was able to engineer and replicate in parallel the customer's legacy Oracle environment so that all essential services could be maintained during migration. It also meant we were able to handle any unexpected delays or roll back aspects of the migration to address problems without compromising our customer," he continues.

"Hamilton took care of everything – the design, set up, equipment provision and installation, decommissioning and breakdown of the entire environment, as well as the onsite data erasure and destruction of around 150 hard drives - and were always on hand to provide additional technical support if we needed it."

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The outcomes:

A cost-controlled migration

Requiring no CAPEX outlay and eliminating any need to invest in a host of depreciating assets that would become redundant once migration was completed, utilising rental kit from Hamilton Rentals meant the managed cloud services provider could engineer a truly agile transition to the cloud for its customer.

Offering the team at the cloud services company unprecedented flexibility, hiring all the physical assets required to duplicate the Oracle platform and soon to be obsolete hardware meant that unexpected project delays could be accommodated with ease.

Giving the company the time it needed to execute a smooth transition to the cloud that would not impact the operations of its customer, Hamilton Rentals handled every aspect of enabling the temporary DR environment – from logistics and set up, to the final de-commissioning of assets.

"Our client set a stringent fixed time frame for this project and then subsequently extended the timeline. Fortunately, Hamilton Rentals was able to flex and accommodate this change – no mean feat for a project of this scale," continues the European spokesman for the managed cloud services provider.

Why Hamilton Rentals?

"Hamilton Rentals offered all the technical capabilities and breadth of expertise we needed to realise a seamless migration strategy for our client.

"Fully certified in all things Oracle, they were experienced at handling large enterprise and networking deployments. Plus, they were able to provide a comprehensive end-of-life offering that met the very specific data protection needs of our customer."

Highly experienced at decommissioning physical data centre environments, Hamilton Rentals was privy to all customer conversations relating to sensitive data erasure. Providing insights into the best practices and options available, Hamilton Rentals tailored a secure sanitisation programme in line with CESG standards that met all the customer's stringent infosec requirements.

"Throughout the entire programme, Hamilton Rentals collaborated closely with our teams to ensure we could determine the best way to support each stage of the migration journey on behalf of our customer," concludes the spokesperson for the managed cloud services provider.

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