Bell Integration
Ambitious Transformation

CASE STUDY

Peters & May Cruise Smoothly to the Cloud

Bell Integration makes migration to the cloud plain sailing for a global maritime logistics firm

Partnering with Bell Integration enables Peters & May to shift to an agile on-demand IT infrastructure that makes it easy to innovate – and adapt its operations to fastchanging market demands.

Background

Navigating to a more agile future

The Peters & May Group has been providing global bespoke logistics solutions by sea, road, and air since 1973.

Offering end-to-end delivery options in six key service arenas – Yacht Shipping, Global Freight Forwarding, Superyacht Transport, Racing Yacht Transport, Commercial Cargo Transport, Project Cargo Transport, and Corporate Express Couriers – the firm's commitment to making life easier for its customers, while ensuring that no destination is out of reach, has established it as the partner of choice for manufacturers, brokers, and individuals around the world.

The company also provides logistical support to many international yacht racing events and the H1 powerboat circuit.

In an industry built upon reputation and relationships, Peters & May continues to grow at an exponential rate. With around 100 employees working from offices located in the UK, the US, China, Hong Kong, Dubai, France, Germany, Italy, Singapore, and Spain, together with a network of exclusive agents across the world, the company continues to extend its global reach.

To enable the operational agility it needs to fulfil its future ambitions and capture new post-pandemic opportunities, Peters & May decided it was time to embrace a cloud-first strategy and modernise its IT infrastructure.

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The requirement

Changing world, changing IT requirements

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic forced Peters & May to rethink operational models and adapt fast to the crisis conditions impacting the markets it serves.

“Having to respond fast to highly disruptive circumstances forced us to realign our business practices and re-think ways to become more efficient and resilient,” explains Julian Sheppard, Group Procurement Manager at Peters & May.

Despite utilising cloud-native applications like Office 365 that enabled its global teams to stay productive and seamlessly collaborate, even when working remotely, the firm’s own ageing on-premises IT infrastructure was starting to feeling the strain. As a result, service failures were becoming more frequent – causing frustrations for end-users.

“The servers in our US and UK offices had come to the end of their service life, so maintaining uptime was an increasingly complex and costly affair. This compromised our ability to sustain uptime with certainty or assure recovery following a major event,” continues Julian Sheppard.

The firm faced a stark choice. Invest significant capital in bringing its server rooms to the level needed to support the business or leverage the cloud to do more than just simply weather the post-COVID storm.

“We knew that migrating to the cloud would enable us to tap into the compute capacity needed to de-risk our operations and enhance business continuity. It also meant we’d be able to rapidly scale our infrastructure in line with evolving business and customer requirements.”

To achieve its vision, Peters & May needed to work with a trusted IT partner that could both re-boot its IT infrastructure - and manage every aspect of its new cloud environment.

“Having to respond fast to highly disruptive circumstances forced us to realign our business practices and re-think ways to become more efficient and resilient.”

Julian Sheppard
Group Procurement Manager at Peters & May

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The solution

A tailor-made approach

Following a rigorous tender and due diligence process, Peters & May selected Bell Integration to architect its migration to the cloud and manage its new cloud estate.

“Bell Integration stood out from the other contenders,” confirms Julian Sheppard. “They listened and got under the hood of issues, creating a bespoke solution for our business that was both pragmatic and cost-effective.”

With limited in-house technical resources, the management team at Peters & May needed to understand the rationale behind the hybrid infrastructure model Bell Integration had proposed – and the advantages this offered going forward.

“There was no hiding behind technical jargon – Bell Integration simply laid out the strategy and their thinking behind it and were extremely responsive whenever we asked for further clarifications,” continues Julian Sheppard.

Having undertaken a detailed discovery of the firm’s existing IT environment, Bell Integration designed a hybrid cloud solution built around Microsoft Azure. This approach ensured Peters & May’s journey to the cloud would not be delayed by core legacy business applications that needed to be modernised prior to migration to the cloud.

“The tactics recommended by Bell gave us breathing space to resolve transitioning non-cloud native back-office systems and progress to a full cloud-only strategy over the coming months,” confirms Julian Sheppard.

First, Bell Integration engineered the switch over of the firm’s US operations to the new Azure and Microsoft 365 cloud infrastructure. This was followed shortly by the UK head office which supports the rest of the firm’s global operations. As part of the process, Bell Integration refreshed the company’s remaining internal IT and security provisions to enable an open and flexible enterprise-grade cloud platform that creates true value for the business.

“In under eight weeks, Bell have enabled us to harness the power of cloud and achieve the end-to-end digital transformation that will enable us to reinvent our business – and outmanoeuvre uncertainty,” says Julian Sheppard.

Users are already commenting on the enhanced capabilities and productivity the new environment has made possible.

“Teams using compute heavy applications such as CAD to generate technical drawings and loading plans for container ships say these are now noticeably faster and more responsive,” confirms Julian Sheppard.

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The outcomes

Building back better with cloud

Requiring no CAPEX outlay and eliminating any need to invest in a host of depreciating assets, Peters & May now has a future-proofed and holistic infrastructure that can easily accommodate the growing needs of the business.

"The learnings we acquired during the coronavirus pandemic highlighted the vital importance being nimble and embracing new agile ways of working. Cloud makes a lot of the technology constraints that typically hamper operational agility go away – so you can innovate fast and build out new service offerings quickly," confirms Julian Sheppard.

In the coming months, Peters & May plans to expand its freight forwarding division beyond its traditional marine industry base and strengthen its business operations in response to changing industry demands.

"Our new cloud infrastructure means we can spin up users and new office locations at a moment's notice for as long as we need to, paying only for the resources we utilise. It's a cost effective utility-based approach that will serve us well as we target market opportunities and potential acquisitions that have arisen as a result of the failure of competitors who were less well managed than we were during the pandemic," continues Julian Sheppard.

"Our objective with this technology refresh was to plan for the unexpected – and Bell Integration has enabled us to embrace a new cloud infrastructure that ensures we're equipped to handle whatever we encounter next."

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Why Bell Integration?

Julian Sheppard says that he, and other senior managers at Peters & May, knew Bell Integration offered the perfect blend of technical expertise, know-how and professionalism from the get-go.

"During the initial tender process, they impressed us all with their honesty, integrity and no nonsense approach. At no point did they try to bamboozle us with science or inflate the solution with options that were irrelevant or unnecessary. They kept to the brief and created a clear and transparent roadmap that would enable us to realise our cloud ambitions."

"Early on, you know when a service provider speaks your language and Bell's culture aligned very closely to our own – like us, they are dedicated to providing an authentic premium service that represents an exact fit to identified needs."

"Our experiences during the tender experience have been mirrored in the migration and managed support service delivered by Bell. These guys really are trustworthy, do what they say they will do, and are pleasant and professional to deal with. It's been a pleasure to work with someone who is set to become a long term strategic partner to the business."

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About Bell Integration

Bell Integration is a global technology leader that partners with customers to create lasting, ambitious digital transformation.

We are our customer's accelerator – orchestrating the right partners, systems, and ideas to create measurable impact.

Bell Integration brings over 30 years of trust, expertise, and innovation to the table, evolving from an independent UK-based business to a global powerhouse.

With talented teams operating across continents, we support the full IT life cycle from strategic consulting to project design and delivery.

See how Bell Integration can help your business succeed. Please contact us on marketing@bell-integration.com or visit www.bell-integration.com.

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