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DIGITAL INNOVATION

Global Bank Executes a Seamless Data Centre Migration

A safe and secure cut over of disaster recovery (DR) IT services and supporting infrastructure assures the uninterrupted delivery of continuous 24x7 live services to customers

Bell Integration coordinates a complex technical migration project on behalf of a leading Fortune 500 firm with no disruption to business.

Background

Focus on business continuity

One of the world's leading providers of financial services to institutional investors, this Fortune 500 firm operates in over 100 geographic markets.

As a provider of a broad array of investment services, investment management and investment research and trading services to the world's institutions, the bank is a long-standing trusted partner to corporations, public funds, insurance companies and other investment bodies around the globe.

Playing a key role in the worldwide operations of clients means the firm needs to be certain it can resume critical business functions fast and has a comprehensive portfolio of time-sensitive disaster recovery solutions in place to address facility, workforce, technology and dependency loss scenarios.



Embarking on a risk-free migration

A major planned data centre consolidation programme meant the bank needed to shift its EMEA-based disaster recovery services and supporting IT infrastructure from a colocation data centre (DC) in Luxembourg to a new setting at its in-house DC based in Canary Wharf, London.

To assure the business continuity of its live operations, cut-over needed to be faultlessly managed and executed within a tight timeframe. Any delay or runover would mean the firm would need to negotiate an expensive extension at its existing colocation DC contract – adding significant additional cost to the programme.

This extremely tight deadline meant the firm needed to work with a highly experienced migration partner that could manage the entire end-to-end process in a timely manner. Alongside providing the impeccable technical and project management capabilities required to undertake this complex task, this partner would also be responsible for coordinating a large number of external third party providers.

Having undertaken a large number of successful DC migrations for organisations working in the highly regulated financial services sector, Bell Integration was selected to help the firm unleash a streamlined migration process that was optimised for success.

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Requirement

Utilising a proven methodology

Conducting an at-scale migration within the financial services industry depends on utilising a well-thought out methodology and governance plan that ensures all stakeholders are tightly aligned and understand what needs to happen – and when.

Bell Integration first lead a series of workshops with internal technical teams to gain deep insights into the internal processes and underlying inter-relationships between application affinities, interfaces and their dependencies. Understanding and mapping these dependences would prove critical for defining a master migration schedule containing the exact sequence of events necessary for migrating all applications without disruption.

Having evaluated the entire environment, Bell Integration produced a series of highly detailed migration runbooks containing application profiles for each application to be migrated.

Alongside migrating workloads, the project would involve the relocation of two massive storage arrays, a number of high density IBM servers, exchange servers, a hardware management console appliance as well as 18 virtual machines. All of which needed to be shipped and re-implemented in London.

Having evaluated the entire environment, Bell Integration produced a series of highly detailed migration runbooks containing application profiles for each application to be migrated.

Acting as the 'Bible' for what happened and when, these runbooks contained the mission critical reference documentation used by all internal teams and key stakeholders, including the external providers who support the day-to-day operation of the firm's DR DC as well as the suppliers responsible for the installation of the DC and its network on relocation to London.

Featuring governance for every step and action, these runbooks provided a blueprint that made it possible for teams to work cohesively and in concert every step of the way. Ensuring everyone was able to coordinate their migration actions in a precise, timely and highly controlled manner.



The solution

The path forward: executing a seamless DC migration plan

In the weeks running up to the migration event, Bell Integration worked closely with the firm's technical teams to ensure everyone had a deep understanding of the migration approaches and methods that would be deployed once the series of migration events began to be cascaded.

This contextual know-how ensured everyone was able to act with confidence as the multi-phase operation progressed. Throughout, the bank retained complete design approval over the entire migration plan and the risk management procedures utilised by Bell Integration.

Having obtained all required statutory consents from its clients in relation to the move of their data from one EU geographic location to the UK, everything was aligned to proceed with the phased migration.

Following the successful migration of the firm's virtual servers, Bell Integration next oversaw the 'lift and shift' of all physical hardware from Luxembourg to Canary Wharf. Responsible for the on-site co-ordination of teams on the ground in the UK and Luxembourg, Bell Integration's deep know-how of everything from networking to backend systems proved critical for assuring the creation of the new highly available and dependable DR environment.



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The outcomes

A trusted project partner

The weekend of the switch-over produced some unexpected challenges in the form of inclement weather conditions that threatened to overturn the planned shipment of hardware from the decommissioned DC.

Overcoming both storms and stringent post-Brexit customs procedures, Bell Integration went above and beyond to ensure that the newly built setting was up and running, and that all physical hardware was shipped and arrived on site as planned, and to schedule. Throughout this final project phase, the Bell team worked closely alongside external service providers to ensure the London fit out and installation process ran smoothly.

With everything successfully installed and ready to go, Bell Integration was able to complete the final migration of all infrastructure, data and applications to the newly built DC setting in London. The project deadline was met and the close of the weekend all the firm's mission-critical DR services were once again up and running as planned.



Why Bell Integration?

Alongside handling the technical aspects of the migration project, Bell's impressive methodology and excellent project management skills ensured that the tight migration timescales were never compromised.

But Bell's unique added value proved to be its dedication to building high performing working relationships with all teams – including the firm's external vendors. Leveraging these relationships, Bell Integration was able to ensure everyone worked cohesively as one – and ensured it was always on hand to support external suppliers the moment they encountered a challenge.

This holistic and hands-on approach meant that a huge level of trust was created between everyone involved in the project and transparent communications were maintained at all times. Alongside the tightly integrated migration runbooks that informed teams of each step of the process, Bell provided detailed status updates and reporting to ensure all stakeholders were informed of progress – and that nothing was ever left to chance.

The successful completion of this migration project has established Bell Integration as a trusted vendor and partner and is paving the way for future collaborations on major DC migration events.

Contact us

With over 25 years of experience and offices across the globe, Bell Integration delivers Data Centre, Cloud and End User services within some of the world's most prestigious customer environments. With capabilities covering technology provision, consulting, project & managed services and asset retirement services, we add value to our customers at several touch points throughout the life-cycle of their IT environments.

**See how Bell Integration can help your business succeed.
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