

# 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 its 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 progressing with no technical issues

### 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
- As one of Britain's largest listed food organisations, it employs over **4,000** people at **15** manufacturing sites 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, including its subsidiary businesses such as Knighton Foods which specialises in the production of powdered food products. The primary objective was to implement a more flexible and cost-efficient method for delivering services to its IT users and migration to the public cloud was under consideration. However, 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 provided us with 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.

**“ All throughout this process, CDW worked closely with us to ensure we were happy with the solution being proposed. This approach meant we came to view CDW as an extension of our own team. ”**

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

## SOLUTION

Following analysis of options during a series of workshops, CDW recommended a migration to Amazon Web Services, 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. Also, by offering a managed service, CDW gave Premier Foods access to a team of highly accredited Solutions Architects and the knowledge that any issues or infrastructure changes would be addressed rapidly.

The assessment of Premier Foods' IT estate enabled CDW to produce detailed dependency mapping – effectively working

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out how the organisation's IT assets were interlinked and understanding how the migration of one asset to the cloud 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 based on individual batches, integrating the workflows into a broader project management framework.

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. 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.

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## OUTCOME

The migration activity is now underway, and 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, Director, Cloud Services & R&D at CDW. “Premier Foods had seen a boom in business in the first half of this year, and so it was 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 public cloud project has gone exceptionally well from the outset, resulting in a smooth migration 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. “But equally important was its strong approach to project management. By establishing incremental steps which moved workloads over in batches, we gained confidence and started to fully understand the AWS environment.”

Gareth Byrne-Perkins was also impressed by the collaborative nature of the engagement with CDW, and by the level of technical expertise contained within the organisation. “We have a small IT team with a big voice, and CDW has always been happy to take on our views and adapt accordingly. They sat in the room with us, listened, understood our needs, and built an effective plan, mapping out several different ways to manage the revenue. It was fantastic.”

“There was also clear evidence of a lot of technical depth within CDW – its technical experts could really hold their own. I expect my own team to challenge our technology providers, when required, and CDW had people on the project who could respond positively to that.”

Agility and flexibility were also high on Gareth Byrne-Perkins' list of requirements on the public cloud project. “Other organisations we spoke to when scoping the project seemed to be so much more static in their approach. CDW, on the other hand, came in and listened to our views, before building the plan with us. It was clear that CDW's people were 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.”

“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,” says Gareth.

Once migration is completed and Premier Foods starts to realise the full benefits of the AWS environment, it can expect to enjoy 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 dedicated 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 at CDW. “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.”

“Overall, I have been thoroughly impressed by the capabilities of the AWS platform, and by CDW's ongoing support,” he says.

To learn more about AWS solutions provided by CDW, please contact your Account Manager or email [CloudEnquiries@uk.cdw.com](mailto:CloudEnquiries@uk.cdw.com).

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