Capgemini migrates Centrica's ERP platform to the AWS Cloud

By executing a rapid migration to the Amazon Web Services platform, Capgemini enabled Centrica to become more agile, lower costs, and take a major step towards completing its sustainability goals

Migrating from on-premises data storage and processing to the cloud

When providing services as critical as energy and utilities to 9 million customers, it is essential for Centrica that all of its systems and processes function smoothly so that its 26,000 employees can do their jobs efficiently. These core systems are built upon the SAP S/4HANA ERP platform, which was hosted on more than 130 servers. As a result, when the time came for Centrica to evolve this platform without disrupting the performance of its software, the organisation knew that it would have to choose a trusted partner who could deliver the most appropriate solutions.

This led to Centrica choosing Capgemini to migrate the S/4HANA platform to Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud. Capgemini's lengthy history of successful collaborations and deep experience with Centrica's ERP platform made it the natural partner of choice to ensure that the transition was completed quickly and with minimal disturbance to its services. With a single team consisting of Centrica business leaders, Capgemini experts and AWS solution architects, a rapid initiative was launched to introduce the cloud environment.

Client: Centrica

Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Energy and Utilities

Challenges: Faced with business agility demands alongside a customer promise of 'helping you run your world in more sustainable ways', Centrica wanted to deliver a more agile and green set of enterprise solutions with a move from on-premises IT to cloud.

Solution: Partnering with Capgemini, Centrica transitioned its core financial SAP S/4HANA platform to the Amazon Web Services cloud environment within a 10-week period.

Benefits:
- 20-30% cost reduction for finance operations
- Ability to reconfigure/expand at speed
- Improved access to and use of real-time data
- 67 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent saved annually

AWS supports the SAP S/4HANA platform

Timescales were exceptionally challenging. Over a 10-week period, the team worked collaboratively to accelerate and reduce the risk of the migration. This involved the introduction of operational best practices for SAP workloads running on Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) virtual machines as well as a combination of technologies that delivered the necessary level of data storage.

Capgemini then built a highly secure landing zone, onto which they deployed a cloud management platform to automate the deployment of identity and access management, governance, and data security controls for the Amazon EC2 instances that ran SAP applications. All of this was accomplished even as the team had to work entirely remotely as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. "Working remotely was new to all of us," explains Lloyd Smith, director of enterprise systems and services (SAP) at Centrica. "Yet we managed to build a platform of 130-plus virtual machines and migrate 15 SAP applications and around 35 terabytes of data in just 10 weeks without disruption to the organisation."

Sustainability and innovation hand-in-hand

With the AWS cloud environment implemented quickly and with due consideration paid to maintaining the team's health and safety, Capgemini ensured that Centrica had access to a highly secure and scalable system that would support its digital needs going into the future. The migration led to a 20-30% reduction in the costs associated with its finance systems, which resulted from the organisation's efforts to rationalise and simplify its operations while continuing to provide service in line with the historical expectations of its customers. Additionally, the project delivered greater agility and flexibility, which will enable the business to rapidly scale its infrastructure as needed in response to future needs. This has also expanded Centrica's ability to make use of real-time data in guiding key decision-making.

"Being able to access real-time data will bring us advantages in developing new products and services, and the ability to scale new business in other markets," says Darren Miles, Chief Information Officer at Centrica.

In line with the partners' commonly held belief in the essential nature of sustainability, the organisations placed additional emphasis on supporting carbon neutrality initiatives. In addition to enabling new ways of working, the migration of more than 130 servers to the AWS platform will save an estimated 67 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent annually. This will play a key role in meeting Centrica's goal of achieving a 35% reduction in its carbon footprint by 2025. With its digital infrastructure now hosted upon AWS, Centrica has improved its ability to respond rapidly to evolving customer expectations and shifts in the market. Greater efficiency and access to real-time data have improved both the customer and employee experience while preparing the organisation for a future based on innovation within the digital sphere.

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