

Data#3 Customer Story

Pernod Ricard Winemakers

*Azure Migration gives Pernod Ricard
Greater Flexibility and Improved Performance*

Data#3



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Objective

Pernod Ricard wanted to 'lift and shift' their existing virtual machines (VMs) into a cloud environment to give greater flexibility and simplify management.

Approach

The Pernod Ricard team performed initial research to give them a clearer picture of market options and how they could match business needs. They then assessed capabilities of technology partners, and following meetings with key Data#3 Microsoft Azure specialists, determined that Data#3's capabilities and expertise matched all their required criteria.

Benefits

- Microsoft Azure data centre environment
- Greater flexibility for core systems
- Improved visibility
- Reduced management burden
- High level of security
- Improved performance
- Confidence in key applications
- IT team has more time for project work

Solutions & Services

- Microsoft Azure
- Security
- Public Cloud Migration
- Deployment Services

Project Highlight

“The highlight of the project is we now have improved performance, increased confidence in our key applications, as well as a more secure environment, which means less workload for our teams.”

**Simon Burrows, Core Infrastructure Manager,
Pernod Ricard Winemakers**

Testimonial

“The Pernod Ricard Winemakers Infrastructure team, supported by Data#3, did an excellent job migrating our systems to the Microsoft Azure Cloud with no business disruption. A proven project methodology combined with expert guidance de-risked this complex project, enabling Pernod Ricard Winemakers to leverage the benefits of Microsoft Azure while continuing to deliver an important technology transformation program across agri-tech, consumer engagement, optimisation and automation.”

**Simon Bennett, IT Director,
Pernod Ricard Winemakers**

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The Background

With global headquarters in Paris, Pernod Ricard has a direct presence in 73 countries, and distributes its range of beverages to 180 countries. The business offers more than 240 of the world's favourite wine, champagne and spirit brands, all carefully cultivated to support moments of 'convivialité' and connection.

As key IT infrastructure approached end of life, a decision was made to transition their virtual machines (VMs) to a Microsoft Azure public cloud, rather than replace with updated on-premises equipment.

The Challenge

From Pernod Ricard's headquarters in France, and throughout operations including Australia, the business blends traditional quality with modern processes, making it a leader in the Fast-moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. Core Infrastructure Manager, Simon Burrows, said this progressive approach depends on a wealth of experience, as well as a smart approach to technology.

“In FMCG, technology is quite a big deal. We rely on technology ranging from Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems to customer-facing information systems, as well as operational technology that supports us producing bottles en masse. We've still got a lot of history in Pernod Ricard, in particular in the winemaking area, where some of our staff have more than 40 years' experience of producing the best.”

Pernod Ricard used on-premises infrastructure, but was fast approaching the time for renewal. The equipment had served the business well, thanks to careful management by the in-house team. Still, in the interim, more technology choices had emerged, and cloud services had matured, and Pernod Ricard was keen to seize the opportunity to progress.

“We had older kit, and that becomes harder to secure, plus we were running out of capacity. We had the option to refresh the data centre or move to cloud. We had already decided that cloud was the right choice; the trend in the industry was that a lot more companies were embracing cloud, automating more, and that would mean we could focus our time on more business-strategic projects. It made sense to get out of managing a datacentre and shift to cloud,” described Burrows.

The nature of Pernod Ricard's rapid pace of business meant that it was essential to minimise any impact to normal operations. This made the decision of choosing our technology partner critical. Burrows said that experience and trust were important.

“We did get quotes from a couple of other potential partners. But we have been happy with Data#3 for quite some time, and they have worked on a bit of everything for us. A big factor was that they kept to their word, and were quick to address any issues, so we knew they could do what they said.”

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IT Outcome

Approximately 180 VMs were lifted from Pernod Ricard's on-premises environment to the Microsoft Azure cloud. Data#3 was able to help Pernod Ricard to access Microsoft funding to assist with the migration, helping to realise value of the project more rapidly.

Pernod Ricard made the decision to engage with Data#3 early in the initial assessment phase, and worked in close collaboration throughout the project. A series of meetings and workshops helped to prepare for the move. Access to an experienced team paid off.

“The project was split into four or five phases, from designing the foundation we were migrating to, and working on a proof of concept to test that design, right through to migration. We had to address some issues on-the-go during the initial migration, but we were able to identify the cause and get it under control quickly because we had access to the right people. One of the benefits of the ‘lift and shift’ approach is that there is zero impact to the business other than an outage for migration of data, and this makes it transparent for the business,” explained Burrows.

Increases in frequency and sophistication of cyberattacks affect every industry, and Burrows said that security must inevitably be a key consideration in any significant change.

“Security was a big factor for us. Rather than just refreshing our on-premises environment, moving to Microsoft Azure meant we didn't have to worry about the vulnerability that comes with a kit as it ages,” outlined Burrows.

While the initial approach was one of ‘lift and shift’, the Pernod Ricard team is identifying opportunities to transition to cloud-based applications where appropriate, and where there is a clear benefit to the business.

“A couple of apps were upgraded this year, for example we moved databases such as Oracle and SQL Server to cloud services, and we are about to do our web app using an ‘as a Service’ plan instead of installing software. We are using Microsoft Azure Load Balance and are starting to see more applications leveraging the benefits of Microsoft Azure.”

Business Outcome

Pernod Ricard's busy IT team worked hard to ensure that the migration happened out of hours. Moving a huge volume of bottles per hour means that any downtime can be costly, and commitments to customers must always be met.

“The migration took place on Saturday from 8 am to 10 pm, and the same times on Sunday. Then, on the Monday, we started at 4 am just to make absolutely sure nothing had been missed,” recounted Burrows.

While many IT projects happen without users noticing any improvement, the transition to Microsoft Azure was not among them.

“Even though it wasn't a terribly aged kit we replaced, with an average age of six years, the business noticed an improvement straight away. In some cases, there was a four-fold performance improvement. It was a key project for us, and we seamlessly delivered a better user experience.”

While Pernod Ricard's careful planning paid off, there were disruptions that could not have been foreseen at the start. Burrows described a “well-managed” shift to working from home during COVID-19 that allowed the business to perform well, and navigate other hurdles more effectively.

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“It is good that we were able to work together closely, and that Data#3 was flexible, because we weren't entirely sure when the business would be ready to set a migration date. We worked around challenges as our business priorities changed – for example, because of COVID-19, the business had to change one of the main distribution companies we use, and that project took precedence. The Microsoft Azure project was put on hold for a couple of months, then we had to focus on end of financial year, which is a busy time. All through this, we were able to make sure that drinks reached the shops,” said Burrows.

“It helped with Data#3 being flexible, they had done this before, which meant they had learned from previous migrations.”

The in-house team already boasted Microsoft Azure experience and collaborating with Data#3's cloud specialists was seen as an opportunity to further add to that skillset.

“Nobody was resistant to the change, it was embraced as the team was keen to learn new technologies and happy to strengthen their market value,” explained Burrows.

For Pernod Ricard Winemakers IT Director, Simon Bennett, the partnership with Data#3 made all the difference.

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Conclusion

Given the critical role of technology in the FMCG sector, Pernod Ricard's IT team is keen to continually add value. Escaping the time burden of managing on-premises equipment has allowed them to do exactly that.

“Our business reliance on technology has increased, and we are fortunate that we have reduced some of the workload we were doing on-premises, so that we can do more project related work for the business,” said Burrows.

The improved performance of essential applications, such as the beverage company's Enterprise Resource Planning system, have been especially well received. This has, said Burrows, reduced the support time needed.

“We were getting more issues with the ERP day to day than we are getting now. There was a lot more potential for something to go wrong, we were getting infrastructure issues before that we simply don't get in Microsoft Azure.”

For those considering a similar move, Burrows' advice is to make sure that the right people within the business are engaged, and understand what is needed to complete the migration successfully.

“It is a matter of having the right sponsors in the business. If the business is losing interest, it would be easy for a cloud migration to be removed from the budget. People often overlook what is required from the business beyond the project team, so understanding and communicating this is important,” explained Burrows.

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Data#3 and Microsoft

Since 1994, Data#3 has combined forces with Microsoft to help our customers adapt and grow. Today, we are Microsoft's largest Australian business partner with the highest level of competency across the Microsoft ecosystem. Our hundreds of accredited consultants are ready to help our customers deliver the digital future; from enhancing productivity and collaboration with Microsoft 365 and the latest Surface devices, to transforming business processes with Dynamics 365, to ensuring our customers get the most value from Azure cloud. Our scale and expertise enable our unparalleled support to customers selecting, deploying, managing and securing Microsoft applications, products and devices.

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