Manufacturing case study

Etex sets digital path moving large SAP workloads to Azure

Cognizant and Microsoft help Etex migrate its SAP and non-SAP workloads to Azure cloud to achieve flexibility, improve performance and increase efficiency.

The challenge

Etex, a pioneer and global leader in new construction methods and lightweight construction materials, is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. Founded in 1905, the company has expanded throughout Europe and the world. Major acquisitions in fire protection, plaster technology, modular construction and engineering have allowed Etex to contribute to the transformation of the construction industry.

Working within a soon-to-expire infrastructure hosting contract for enterprise IT services, Etex sought a new partner that could offer more flexible, cost-effective terms. The existing contract used a pricing model that led to an undesirable automatic full month billing.

The company also wanted to migrate to a public cloud hyperscaler that offered agile data processing and greater flexibility and scalability. Depending on compute utilization, Etex wanted to scale up or down quickly. This vision tied to the industry's unprecedented rising adoption of SAP on public cloud. Public cloud solutions make an excellent choice because they are compliant with industry standards, regulatory and data protection guidelines and are certified by SAP.

At a glance

Industry
Construction

Location
Belgium, Europe

Challenge
Transform a complex infrastructure into a unified, flexible and managed intelligence platform on Microsoft Azure

Products and Services

Cognizant SAP Cloud Assessment and Transformation

Cognizant Managed Platform-as-a-Service (mPaaS)

Microsoft Azure

Success Highlights

- Flexible, transparent pricing supports scaling up or down per business requirements

- Achieved improved system performance over the previous on-premises system

- Estimated 20% cost saving annually on infrastructure hosting over the previous on-premises system

Additional migration considerations

Etex had to decide whether to adopt a single- or multi-cloud strategy for hosting SAP workloads. Because there was an existing data footprint already in the Microsoft Azure Cloud, this became an important consideration due to the impact it would have on staffing requirements and costs. There were also network design complexities that could lead to integration challenges.

Timing was another consideration due to challenges with available network bandwidth and business downtime requirements to meet and enable Etex's One Phase, big bang go-live on schedule. Etex wanted to migrate large database SAP workloads from the incumbent data center to the target cloud with the least amount of downtime.

Performance issues due to physical hardware capacity at the current datacenter were also identified, and while scaling up was an option with the incumbent vendor, the cost was not transparent, and the task would be too time consuming.

Benefits of moving forward with the transformation:

- Gain the flexibility to scale cloud resource capacity up or down per business requirements
- Avoid technology-related challenges such as periodic hardware refresh and associated costs
- Discontinue working with the complex network design of the incumbent data center

The approach

Etex chose Cognizant as a consulting partner to assess its public cloud hyperscaler solution and support the evaluation of solutions offered by Google Cloud Platform, Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure. Using our cloud advisory approach, we assisted Etex to select the right target cloud platform aligned to its future roadmap for SAP and non-SAP workloads, and the choice was Microsoft Azure.

Applying a unique four-phased approach

Cognizant applied its unique, accelerated, four-phase approach to cloud migration using the Cognizant SAP Cloud Assessment and Transformation (cCAT) Framework for SAP cloud enablement. Our accelerators reduce the manual efforts of cloud design and leverage the substantial experience we have accumulated executing SAP transformation projects on public cloud.

The cCAT framework's library contains templates, guided procedures and best practices that increase the quality and productivity of SAP migration and deployments to public cloud. Because one of Etex's key goals was to improve flexibility and design future-proof architecture using best practices, this was a natural fit.

Customer-centric solutions

To reduce risk and minimize business disruption Cognizant used the Azure migrate tool (AMT) for application migration, which allowed Etex to retain hostnames and database types and versions. These measures reduced testing efforts and led to cost savings.

Cognizant also recommended a customized migration approach for each SAP product landscape based on database product and size for optimal business downtime. Cognizant grouped tightly coupled system in waves and performed migrations, one wave after another. This mitigated a risk due to lower network bandwidth challenges. Our lean, focused functional testing process resulted in near-zero reported defects.

A resilient business continuity solution

Cognizant's architecture of systems on cloud, which caters to application availability and near-zero data loss in case of disaster, was applied to improve Etex's disaster recovery (DR) program. We also adapted SAP on Azure best practices on technology solutioning for compute, storage and network design, leading to fewer defects and a stable digital core. Periodic drills ensured the DR design met business system resilience requirements for recovery time objective (RTO) and recovery point objective (RPO).

"Adopting digital transformations like hosting our SAP estate on cloud has great potential when operated on hyperscale platforms like Microsoft Azure. Cognizant is a trusted technology partner and advisor with strong credentials in orchestrating a migration of SAP to Microsoft Azure."

Richard Pym, Head of Technology at Etex

"Fortified by strong partnerships with Microsoft and SAP, Cognizant has shown its expertise in SAP and cloud technologies to build and migrate our SAP applications to Microsoft Azure in an optimized business downtime. Cognizant also deployed robust network solutions on Azure to gain the high performance we want in our day-to-day operations."

Jean-Francois Lefebvre, Project Manager at Etex

Michiel Coox, Enterprise Client Executive at Microsoft says, "The SAP cloud migration project at Etex achieved solid business outcomes and a stable platform via SAP Certified VMs on Microsoft Azure and other Azure services like HANA recovery vault and Proximity Placement Group (PPG). Cognizant, Microsoft and Etex worked together collaboratively in identifying the most efficient way to perform this migration. Azure Migrate Tool (AMT) was leveraged to migrate the SAP workloads seamlessly in a phased manner with minimal business disruption. Etex will benefit from Microsoft's world-class data centers, security, SAP certified infrastructure and the added assurance of Azure Site Recovery for DR between the Availability Zones in the same region."

Business outcomes

The SAP transformation, which migrated systems seamlessly for 6,500+ users worldwide, offers users and the company benefits from the power of the cloud, performance improvements and costs savings.

Business results include:

- Greater flexibility to scale up or scale down, in addition to minimum reserved capacity for better spend on cloud infrastructure

- Achieved improved system performance over the previous on-premises system

- Estimated cost savings of 20% annually over the previous on-premises system

Beyond the immediate gains, Cognizant aligned project efforts with business downtime, per Etex's requirement to avoid a longer IT outage maintenance window. And given that both teams are Cognizant, we were able to easily collaborate on project execution and the handover to managed services.

About Etex

Etex inspires the world to build safe, sustainable, smart and beautiful living spaces with a wide spectrum of lightweight solutions. From applications for cladding, façade, roofing and terrace to high-performance fire protection and insulation for construction and OEM applications. ETEX has 13500+ employees and operates in 45 countries, with headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

For more information, please visit www.etexgroup.com

![cognizant logo]

Cognizant (Nasdaq-100: CTSH) engineers modern businesses. We help our clients modernize technology, reimagine processes and transform experiences so they can stay ahead in our fast-changing world. Together, we're improving everyday life. See how at **www.cognizant.com** or **@Cognizant.**

World Headquarters

300 Frank W. Burr Blvd.
Suite 36, 6th Floor
Teaneck, NJ 07666 USA
Phone: +1 201 801 0233
Toll Free: +1 888 937 3277

European Headquarters

280 Bishopsgate
London
EC2M 4RB
+44 207 297 7600
Email: infouk@cognizant.com

India Operations Headquarters

#5/535 Old Mahabalipuram Road
Okkiyam Pettai, Thoraipakkam
Chennai, 600 096 India
Phone: +91 (0) 44 4209 6000

APAC Headquarters

1 Fusionopolis Link, Level 5
NEXUS@One-North, North Tower
Singapore 138542
Phone: +65 6812 4000
Email: inquiry@cognizant.com