Travel and Hospitality case study

Supercharging digital via enterprise integration at Whitbread

Whitbread supported by Cognizant establishes an integration competency center (ICC) and modernizes its integration approach with a Microsoft Azure-based enterprise integration platform, enabling significant cost savings.

The challenge

Whitbread is a British multinational hotel and restaurant company, a hospitality business leader and the owner of one of the UK's biggest hotel brands with a growing presence in the UK and Germany. Whitbread differentiates itself by offering quality accommodation at affordable prices, serving over five million customers every month in its hotels and restaurants.

Whitbread has aggressive plans to expand its business footprint and customer reach in the UK and Europe while optimizing the spend on IT through technology transformation, greater customer and employee experience and reduced total cost of ownership (TCO).

However, a heterogeneous mix of integrations (P2P, file-transfers, service-oriented architecture [SOA] services, etc.), lack of governance around integration platform, limited enterprise integration platform (EIP) capability, skill gaps, delivery issues and redundant software resulted in higher capex and Opex costs and impeded Whitbread's technology transformation journey, ultimately impacting the customer and employee experience and operational efficiency.

WHITBREAD

At a glance

Industry
Travel and Hospitality

Location
United Kingdom

Challenge
Implement best-practice, standardized and future-proof approach to digital integration to support Whitbread's business growth and international expansion plans.

Success Highlights

- Modernized the digital integration platform that is scaled to transformation needs and is future ready

- Significant savings in software license and service costs

- Faster time to market and improved agility to support business growth objectives

- Improved quality and performance of the integrations there by significantly reducing the number of incidents and improving the SLA compliance

cognizant®

Whitbread engaged Cognizant to support the modernization and streamline its integration discipline with the goal of turning integration into a strategic, well-governed enterprise discipline across its business.

The approach

In view of Whitbread's challenges, goals and transformation aspirations, Cognizant proposed an approach comprising:

- Setting up an integration competency center (ICC) and evangelizing an integration service delivery and governance engine
- Setting up a Microsoft Azure-based EIP leveraging Azure Integration Services that were future-proofed and could scale to Whitbread's growth and transformation demands
- Migrating the integrations from the legacy integration platform to the newly set up EIP.
- Developing an operational model for an ICC for delivering and supporting the transformation needs of multi-cloud integration, cloud migration and software as a service (SaaS) platform integration throughout the lifecycle

Implementation of the ICC

We established an integration capability as a centrally governed enterprise discipline at Whitbread, which would help build future-ready solutions while governing the enterprise integration services. This included an integration service delivery engine and an integration capability model based on the capability needs, engineering best practices, context-relevant architectural and design patterns and principles.

The best practices, design patterns and principles standardized delivery process, resulting in faster time to market, cost optimizations, creation of reusable assets and accelerated innovation. A portfolio management approach enabled reusability, efficient governance of integration assets and delivery of integrations at scale across on-premises and multi-cloud applications. A centralized integration portfolio management approach enabled the team to:

- Manage and govern integration services, enabling operational reliability and compliance
- Develop reusable integration assets, leading to delivery efficiencies and standardization along with higher return on investment
- Deliver integrations at scale across on-premises and multi-cloud applications
- Set up a flexible delivery model that scaled up and ramped down based on the dynamic demand

Modernized integration platform and roadmap

In line with Whitbread's cloud-first strategy, as a first step toward modernizing the digital integration platform, Cognizant designed and built a Microsoft Azure-based EIP, ensuring the platform is connected to the systems and application on premises and on cloud that are critical to day-to-day business functions.

To support the company's need for an agile, future-proofed platform, we developed a loosely coupled architecture with each Microsoft Azure component independently deployable. The integration platform was further enriched by setting up API management instances, DevOps organizations, CI/CD pipelines and with generic reusable components that the new projects could leverage to cut down the delivery timelines, optimizing license and support costs.

Legacy migration and Microsoft Azure platform in action

We conducted full due diligence and analysis of the legacy integration platform before recommending migration to the EIP for its agility to host a diverse set of integrations, to dynamically scale based on need and traffic and align with Whitbread's cloud-first strategy.

We meticulously analyzed the integrations on the legacy platform and migrated 180+ operations in over 15 critical integrations between the HR system, service management, master data management and various other internal/external systems including API-based, event-driven and schedule-based integrations on the Microsoft Azure-based EIP. This was achieved in a record time of just under six months, demonstrating

" With a multi-cloud , multi-platform services we faced numerous challenges with regards to deploying an enterprise grade integration service one which could be re-usable and scalable. Cognizant showed a clear understanding of the technology problem and proposed a strategic solution to industrialise Azure EIP as the one chatty integration layer. This has driven efficiencies both operational and financial, also helped streamline future plug-in's for our evolving technology landscape. Cognizant have demonstrated how a partner can add value to a complex environment and now help manage and operate the solution for Whitbread. "

Rajeet Nair , Head of Technology Operations, Whitbread

the functioning of ICC, the agility, scalability, and time to market attributes of the EIP, yielding significant license and service cost savings.

Ongoing transformation and in-life support

The Microsoft Azure integration layer became the defacto system integration platform for a host of transformation programs integrated with SaaS-based property management systems, finance systems, customer account management, campaign management, ServiceNow, data platforms, pricing engine and HR systems, effectively delivering 275+ operations across 100+ critical APIs with a daily traffic of 4.5M+ API calls.

We also ensured the high availability of the Microsoft Azure integration platform hosting business critical integrations, which it does using Azure-native monitoring and log analytics capabilities along with custom dashboards. These dashboards and analytics provide critical insights into traffic volumes, health of integrations, capacity management, cloud costs and much more.

Business outcomes

As Whitbread expands its footprint in the UK and in Germany, a standardized and well-governed approach to integration has delivered many benefits to the company, including:

- Faster time to market and cost-efficiency due to the use of readily available patterns, solution frameworks and reusable solution components
- One-time and ongoing cost savings by moving to a cloud-native solution
- Enhanced operational control due to application integration via the EIP, and automated monitoring and analytics

A foundation for future business growth and differentiation

Whitbread had a strong, differentiated business model and a clear plan for international expansion but needed to integrate applications seamlessly and at scale in support of its growth objectives. Working with Cognizant, it has implemented a single, enterprise-wide integration platform with a robust governance wrapper, enabling it to successfully implement its technology transformation initiatives while optimizing its IT total cost of ownership. The ICC and EIP give Whitbread the agility and flexibility it needed to adapt to changing market conditions, capitalize on new opportunities and provide a great customer and employee experience.

About Whitbread

Whitbread is the owner of Premier Inn, the UK's biggest hotel brand, and has a growing presence in Germany offering quality accommodation at affordable prices. Its mission is to provide quality, affordable hotels to help guests live and work well and to positively impact the world around us. For more information visit

https://www.whitbread.co.uk/.

cognizant®

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.**