Zurich transforms global IT infrastructure with agile cloud

Client name: Zurich Insurance Group

Location: Zurich, Switzerland

Industry: Insurance

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Challenge
- Improve global IT services delivery
- Modernize traditional data center environment
- Accelerate application development

Solution
- DXC hyperconverged private cloud solution
- DXC Agility Platform™ hybrid cloud management solution
- DXC Data Center services and support

Results
- Moved workloads to private cloud
- Lowered costs by 30 percent, cut provisioning time to 48 hours
- Accelerated development with streamlined DevOps practices
- Future-proofed applications for public or private cloud deployment

Building on a relationship that dates back to 2004, Zurich Insurance Group is working with DXC Technology to move from traditional data center outsourcing to a Platform as a Service model, taking advantage of next-generation cloud management technologies to lower operating costs and accelerate development.

Zurich, a leading multiline insurer with more than 55,000 employees, serves a broad base of policyholders in more than 170 countries.

When Zurich and CSC (now DXC) signed global outsourcing agreements in 1999 that support Zurich's data centers and IT infrastructure across nine countries, the agreement was recognized as one of the insurance industry's largest IT infrastructure transformations. In fact, in 2014, the National Outsourcing Association honored Zurich and CSC with the International Contract of the Year Award.

The relationship is managed by a joint Zurich–DXC steering committee, which provides strategic oversight of all aspects of Zurich's IT transformation. One of the first major IT projects included the refreshing of 3,000 servers across Zurich's Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) data centers and other local service agreement locations — a highly complex 2-year modernization effort.

"Together, we have modernized parts of Zurich's IT infrastructure, and we are continuing to do this in a major transformation program," says Thomas Kropp, Zurich's global head of IT infrastructure. "So far, we have already achieved major improvements in the stability of the system and significant unit-cost reductions. CSC (now DXC) is now enabling an exciting next-gen transformation to the private cloud. This supports the establishment of a hybrid, scalable and shared IT infrastructure."

Centrally managed cloud orchestration

Like many global IT organizations, Zurich manages a variety of workloads on traditional mainframe and x86 environments, in addition to a variety of specialized Software as a Service (SaaS) applications in public clouds. In recent years, a growing number of those workloads have been moved to a private cloud, centrally managed by a cloud orchestration platform.

"The breakthrough for us in the last couple of years has been really appreciating the need to innovate within the overall structure of our contract with CSC (now DXC)," says Chris Rogers, head of service delivery and integration at Zurich. "We need to straddle the cloud and some very traditional elements, such as the mainframe, which is still very important to us. With CSC (now DXC), we really have a partner that helps us straddle both the traditional and the innovative, rather than seeking those things from different vendors."

To help Zurich integrate this environment, DXC abstracted as much of the underlying hardware as possible with DXC Agility Platform™, which includes point-and-click tools to provision new workloads and set up cloud orchestration, governance and security. Zurich also moved to DXC's private cloud, a software-defined data center (SDDC) solution that meets scalability and security requirements at a lower cost.

30 percent price improvement

DXC Agility Platform was connected to Zurich's new private cloud in an afternoon; and in a couple of hours, it began handling loads on the new platform, with the added bonus of a 30 percent price improvement. As a result, the lead time to provision new workloads has been reduced from a matter of weeks to 48 hours.

"We've really seen some dramatic improvements in provisioning time, and we're not just provisioning a virtual server," Rogers says. "We're provisioning a virtual server that's integrated into the rest of the technical environment and into the access management environment — something that is actually usable to a developer. We're really pushing toward Platform as a Service rather than just Infrastructure as a Service."

DXC Agility Platform includes application blueprinting capabilities that enable workloads to move between public, private or hybrid clouds without modifying the applications. This feature is enabling a high degree of integration at Zurich.

"We've used the Agility Platform to provision both into our private cloud environment but also into our x86 environments," Rogers says. "That's important because it's allowed us to integrate the private cloud into the rest of the environment much more successfully, and it's allowed us to move applications and workloads between environments much more successfully."

Ensuring workload portability

Workload portability is important, Rogers says. "We're very cautious about things that are heavily black-boxed or proprietarily integrated. You could get as locked into a cloud solution as much as [into] a traditional system if you don't think about that carefully."

The platform also enables self-service provisioning of workloads; IT teams choose from a storefront of services to rapidly kick off projects and accelerate development cycles through streamlined DevOps practices.

"CSC (now DXC) has long-time cloud experience and has delivered a fully automated system," Kropp says. "This helps us reduce server provisioning times and enables DevOps application development. From a single, unified storefront, our project teams can order services for the private cloud — including procurement and security processes — within hours."

Adds Rogers: "I like to see the right workload in the right place at the right price, and that's what the Agility Platform delivers."

Learn more about DXC private and hybrid cloud solutions at www.dxc/technology/cloud, or contact us at www.dxc.technology/contact_us.

About DXC
DXC Technology (NYSE: DXC) is the world's leading independent, end-to-end IT services company, helping clients harness the power of innovation to thrive on change. Created by the merger of CSC and the Enterprise Services business of Hewlett Packard Enterprise, DXC Technology serves nearly 6,000 private and public sector clients across 70 countries. The company's technology independence, global talent and extensive partner alliance combine to deliver powerful next-generation IT services and solutions. DXC Technology is recognized among the best corporate citizens globally. For more information, visit www.dxc.technology.