CASE STUDY
FULLY MANAGED IZO™ HYBRID CLOUD PLATFORM GIVES INFOR FUTURE-PROOF COMPUTING.
MISSION-CRITICAL MANUFACTURING APPS FROM INFOR® HOSTED BY TATA COMMUNICATIONS CONFER COMPETITIVE EDGE ON ONE OF THE WORLD’S LARGEST FASHION MAKERS.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE
The Infor business model involved licensing state-of-the-art software applications to run on customers’ own IT infrastructures. Tal Apparel was one such customer, but its legacy in-house IBM AS/400 computer systems were strained beyond their capabilities and unable to run newer Infor software.

SOLUTION
Breaking new ground, Infor came forward with a cloud-based solution. Now, IBM workloads run Infor software for Tal Apparel on Tata Communications cloud services. Eight terabytes of data were uploaded, while backup problems were addressed by a professional services team. A second Tata Communications data centre in Hong Kong offers disaster recovery.

BENEFITS
The Infor partnership with Tata Communications has resulted in a state-of-the-art high-performance cloud compute capability running on an IZO™ Hybrid Cloud platform. The implementation project took just six weeks, resulting in speedy time-to-benefit.

“Tata Communications provided the state-of-the-art platform needed for future success. They’re a perfect fit with our culture, and a great partner.”

TIM ANDERSON, VP, CLOUD ARCHITECTURE, INFOR

ABOUT INFOR®
Infor builds business software for specific industries in the cloud. With 16,000 employees and over 90,000 customers in more than 170 countries, Infor software is designed for progress.
To learn more about Infor, please visit www.infor.com.

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MULTIPLE LEGACY PROBLEMS

One of the top four global ERP solution providers, Infor builds process automation applications for its clients. Tal Apparel, one of the world’s largest clothing manufacturers, relies on Infor software to drive mission-critical manufacturing and financial functions. But its in-house IBM AS/400 computers, on which the Infor applications ran, were creating significant bottlenecks with frequent downtime.

High data volumes were swamping that legacy platform. Lack of compute and storage capacity, which couldn’t be scaled up, resulted in slow batch routines. Backups were another headache. Taking many hours, an in-progress backup could sometimes overlap the next scheduled backup. Also, the old AS/400 infrastructure couldn’t run newer Infor software, while support was becoming prohibitively expensive. Worse, lack of disaster recovery arrangements meant Tal Apparel would be in commercial peril in the event of a major outage.

ENTER HIGH-PERFORMANCE CLOUD HOSTING

Tal Apparel contacted Infor for a solution. Tim Anderson, VP of Cloud Architecture at Infor, says: “We needed a solution that would not only relieve Tal Apparel of the burden of managing its own infrastructure, but also be future-proof to support our own application software roadmap as it develops.”

Having considered other service providers, Infor chose Tata Communications because it could offer the latest AS/400 mainframe computers as a cloud-based hosted service with skilled personnel in support. Also, with data centres in Singapore and Hong Kong, Tata Communications could match the Tal Apparel systems geography.

But speed was the ultimate clincher. Keith Lam, project manager for Tal Apparel at Infor, says: “Other vendors could deliver the required infrastructure in three months at the earliest, but Tata Communications could do it in six weeks and guarantee that.”

Immediately the order was placed, Tata Communications assembled a cross-disciplinary team of solution architects and technicians tasked with fully understanding business and technical requirements and mapping out the implementation schedule. “Tata Communications had the technical capabilities and expertise we required,” adds Keith. “It brought the right people to the table to ensure smooth project implementation.”

Secure AS/400 mainframe computers were made available. The Singapore data centre would house production software, while the Hong Kong data centre would offer disaster recovery.

“Tata Communications had the technical expertise we needed. It brought the right people to the table to ensure smooth project implementation.”

KEITH LAM, TAL APPAREL PROJECT MANAGER, INFOR
SKILLED SERVICE PEOPLE

The cloud solution chosen by Infor uses a Tata Communications IZO™ Hybrid Cloud platform running in the Singapore and Hong Kong data centres. Fully-managed 24/7/365 service ensures application availability while freeing up IT staff in Tal Apparel and Infor. A Tata Communications global network enables the IBM Power System platforms to mirror data in real time and assure quick failover should a disaster occur.

"Tata Communications provided the state-of-the-art platform needed for future success," says Tim. "With a second-to-none group of skilled service people, they’re a perfect fit with our culture, and a great partner."

LIFTING TERABYTES OF DATA TO THE CLOUD

As part of a lift-and-shift deployment process, eight terabytes of data were physically transferred from the Tal Apparel in-house infrastructure to the IZO™ Hybrid Cloud system in Singapore. Data synchronisation between old and new infrastructures used replication software tailor-made for IBM environments.

To address the backup problem, professional services people from Tata Communications restructured and deduped the Tal Apparel data. That will see backup time reduced significantly. Following the preliminary data transfer, a second copy of the data was sent to the Hong Kong data centre to fulfil the disaster recovery requirement. That means if the primary system experiences a problem, applications will failover to the secondary server virtually immediately, without business disruption.

“It’s a real challenge to find skilled workers to manage hardware like IBM Power System. If a key person leaves, it’s difficult to replace them. But that’s no longer an issue as Tata Communications has deep know-how across a wide range of computing systems.”

TIM ANDERSON, VP, CLOUD ARCHITECTURE, INFOR
DEEP KNOW-HOW AND STRINGENT SLAS

With full management from Tata Communications the new infrastructure is constantly monitored. If an issue occurs, it’s automatically escalated. Supported by a global team of Tata Communications technicians, stringent SLAs for recovery time and recovery point objectives are baked-in to the Tata Communications cloud architecture.

Tim says: “It’s a real challenge to find skilled workers to manage hardware like IBM Power System. If a key person leaves, it’s difficult to replace them. But that’s no longer an issue as Tata Communications has deep know-how across a wide range of computing systems.”

A PARTNERSHIP IN GLOBAL EXCELLENCE

The partnership between Infor and Tata Communications throws wide a wealth of new opportunities for both companies, helping them realise their joint global growth aspirations.

Infor brings to the game best-in-class business applications. Specialised by industry – and built for the cloud with an artificial-intelligence-led user experience – those Infor software solutions drive perpetual innovation for its clients. Meanwhile, Tata Communications contributes complementary worldwide data centres, computing know-how and global reach. That powerful combination allows the partnership to reach out to customers with a compelling high-performance one-stop cloud shop, anywhere on the planet.

Tim concludes: “In 20 years, I’ve never had a better vendor experience than that offered by Tata Communications. They’re beyond excellent.”

CLOUD COMPUTE SERVICES FROM TATA COMMUNICATIONS

Encompassing both physical and virtual computing, the Tata Communications cloud portfolio is transformation-ready and future-proof. As an end-to-end solution, any company can build a bespoke cloud environment to meet the needs of the enterprise, with on-demand scalability to support growth and fully-managed services to drive it. Choose from a wide range of Tata Communications technologies to deliver seamless application performance, protect vital data, and meet critical SLAs.

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