

ISG embraces the cloud to drive their dynamic construction services vision

Client profile

ISG's vision is to become the world's most dynamic construction services company, delivering places that help people and businesses thrive.

For nearly three decades, they have provided construction solutions to some of the world's largest businesses, cities and institutions.

With 2,800 people across 24 countries they focus on being able to think big, collaborate widely and meaningfully, and build real capacity for change.

For this reason, everything done at ISG, from work with customers to relationships with their own people, is focused on delivering smarter and more resilient places of tomorrow.

Which technologies?

- Microsoft Azure

Which services?

- Cloud Strategy Workshop
- Cloud Managed Services

Which partners?

- Microsoft



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ISG spokesperson

Summary

Aiming to drive innovation in the construction services market ISG was looking to the cloud to modernize the IT that underpins how it provides global construction solutions. After deciding to partner with Microsoft Azure as a future-proof technology platform, they engaged with NTT, an Azure Expert MSP Partner, in order to guide them on their journey.

After an initial Cloud Strategy Workshop we worked together to identify a set of tactical (quick wins) and strategic changes combining Microsoft Azure with our Cloud Managed Services and identify the benefits this would bring to ISG. Our multi-year partnership has since delivered multiple, critical global system transformations to Microsoft Azure.

Business need

Powering the future of construction

As part of their commitment to think big, collaborate widely and meaningfully, and building real capacity for change, ISG's information and communications technology (ICT) plays a critical enabling role.

In this capacity their technology has four main objectives: deliver the best customer experience, deliver the best employee experience, drive operational efficiency and revolutionize the industry.

These objectives are being met through a set of workstreams that include ongoing standardization of global systems, a specific data-led program of digital transformation and a technology incubator initiative.

Various improvements are to be realized along the way, including the reduction of siloed and duplicated data, increased process automation, improving the collection, processing and surfacing of the right data for decision-making purposes, and the simplification of the ICT operating model.

With Microsoft 365 already proving its value inside the organization, it was clear that Microsoft Azure would be the natural home to turn new ideas for applications and data into solutions. However, like many organizations, this decision was just the beginning of their cloud journey and the key challenges were how to plot the right path, get moving and be agile in meeting changing demands.

They realized that they would need the right partner for the whole journey; an Azure Expert MSP partner who could provide the expertise needed to deliver an agile cloud transformation and help them create a cohesive operating model for highly automated and reliable systems on Azure.

Solution

Creating a roadmap to the cloud

They identified that their partner needed to be able to assist them accelerate their Microsoft Azure adoption by providing the skills, experience, cloud-first culture and proven frameworks to ensure momentum, agility and good governance.

We were invited to run a Cloud Strategy Workshop and through this process we were able to map out the business, key stakeholder needs, the IT organization, operational model and systems, and on the back of this we discussed opportunities for cloud adoption.

Through the process it was clear that there was a good strategic fit and the partnership was forged.

Their systems were hosted in a traditional data center environment and they identified that efficiency and reliability could be improved by adopting Microsoft Azure together with our Cloud Managed Services.

Together we defined a target operating model that passes full-stack responsibility to NTT for design, automation and 24x7 operation of systems in the cloud.

"As we consolidate our position as the world's most dynamic construction company, we need to optimize the ICT organization to focus on delivering new digital products and data-driven value," said an ISG spokesperson. "By working with NTT, we have full strategic control and operational visibility but can entrust the automation and operation of Azure-based workloads to them. We share architectural responsibilities and by combining our industry and application expertise with their cloud expertise we both learn, challenge one another and move more quickly and reliably."

In order to realize their Target Operating Model, ISG and NTT embarked on a number of parallel sprints as part of our Cloud Transformation Framework and given the large number of applications that had to be addressed, it was decided to launch with some quick wins.

By focusing on these applications first but keeping in mind the long-term objectives, they were able to create the context needed and map an architecture blueprint that could govern the possible uses case for cloud.

The blueprint leverages our cloud adoption framework and is based on our many years of experience. It acts as a guideline to ensure applications are architected, implemented and operated according to a set of agreed controls. The pillars include elements such as operating model, architecture principles, account structure, identity management, connectivity and security controls.

In parallel to this first sprint, the two teams embarked on the transformation of several applications to Azure, including, a new global storage solution, a new deployment of Microsoft Dynamics NAV – allowing them to consolidate various global regions - and a specialist application for construction cost estimation. Each of these required collaboration with application specialists in order to provide the right Azure infrastructure and managed middleware stack to ensure reliable, efficient, operational services. All of these sprints adhered to the standards that were defined as part of the architecture blueprint, but with a continuous review of the standards as part of an agreed governance process they were able to ensure it remained fit for purpose.

Outcomes

Setting a course for the future of innovation

With ISG setting their cloud and digital-first strategy and moving swiftly forward, our partnership enables them to focus on their strategy while leveraging the cloud to deliver the needed agility.

The construction industry presents many opportunities for innovation and, working together, the two companies are able to design, automate and operate Azure-based systems that can more rapidly power the realization of ISG's purpose – to build smarter and more resilient places of tomorrow.

With the model proven, we continue to work together on larger scale data center modernization, ensuring the right migration plan for each application. New opportunities are arising to make better use of existing data, identify where new data could be valuable and to unlock opportunities for innovation via the ISG Tech Incubator and the Microsoft Intelligent Cloud.

Accelerated deployments

The solution has dramatically reduced the time required to deploy new applications and provision infrastructure. New applications can now be deployed in just three weeks and ISG has seen a 350% improvement in the time needed to provision new infrastructure.

Global reach

With the worldwide Microsoft Azure footprint, ISG's users are seeing an improved user experience because applications are now provisioned closer to their location. This has allowed their 11 client sites across two continents to connect to the optimal Azure region.

Availability and security

The move to the cloud has delivered in 100% uptime for ISG's applications since they went live on Azure. They also have the benefit of the full scope of Azure's cloud native security and availability controls and processes.



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