

CASE STUDY

Princes

Cloud Access for SAP on AWS

FluidOne

PRINCES

Princes was keen to deploy SAP on Amazon Web Services (AWS) because the platform offered increased agility and flexibility for systems development, as well as significant annual cost savings. To take advantage of these benefits, the company needed to migrate its existing SAP suite of applications from a hosted data centre solution to the cloud.

Finding a partner with knowledge of both SAP and AWS was a prerequisite. It was also essential to have a network infrastructure with the throughput and resilience to enable uninterrupted access for Princes' 2,500 users.

FluidOne designed and implemented a hybrid WAN solution, working with other project stakeholders to engineer a smooth transition to AWS.

12-Month ROI
on the cost of SAP migration

50% Annual Savings
on operational expenses

1000+% Improvement
in report processing time

2x Increase
in SAP performance

With a global supply network and a portfolio of branded and customer own brand products, Princes is one of Europe's fastest growing food and drink groups. Headquartered in the UK, the company has operations in the Netherlands, Poland, France, Italy and Mauritius. Princes is a wholly owned subsidiary of Mitsubishi Corporation.

Global food manufacturer has a high dependency on SAP

If you've ever bought a tin of tuna, you've probably heard of Princes but you might be surprised to know that that company's product portfolio actually spans over 20 different categories of food and drink, including renowned brands such as Aqua Pura, Batchelors, Branston, Crisp 'n Dry, Crosse & Blackwell, Mazola, Olivio and Napolina.

Managing the supply chain process for a diverse portfolio is something Princes has been doing, with the help of SAP's automation tools, for over 20 years.

"SAP runs the business," says Enterprise Systems Manager, Arwel Owen. **"If SAP is down, the business literally stops; we have manufacturing plants around the globe and they're all run from a small number of centralised SAP systems."**

Princes currently has around 2,500 users that depend on SAP to do their jobs.

"We've got six or seven different SAP components running live," said Arwel. **"The main system is ERP, managing sales, deliveries, logistics, materials management and finance. We've also got Business Objects, CRM and other SAP components running other aspects of the business."**

Amazon Web Services promises big savings for SAP deployments

Princes had been managing SAP from two hosted data centres for several years but more recently the company had become attracted to the idea of using Amazon Web Services (AWS).

Much like Princes' incumbent solution, the AWS cloud provides a broad set of infrastructure services, such as computing power, storage options, networking and databases but unlike other hosted services, AWS is available on-demand at pay-as-you-go pricing.

"In the SAP environment, 70% of our systems are non-production, such as testing and pre-production; some you can switch off for weeks on end," says Arwel. **"You don't pay for systems that are switched off in AWS. AWS also offers lots of flexibility around testing that would not be possible outside the cloud - you can scale up and down on demand; in the old environment we were limited."**

Of course it's all very well putting your live SAP environment in the cloud but you've got to be able to guarantee that all of your users – wherever they happen to be in the world – are able to access the system

No one knows both AWS and SAP and offers a competitive solution

Whilst the company hadn't put an exact figure on it, Princes was keen to benefit from the significant cost savings promised by an AWS cloud solution.

“We'd wanted to move our non-production systems to AWS for some time and we knew that our hosting partner had expertise with SAP and AWS,” says Arwel. **“When it came to renewing our contract we said, put your money where your mouth is, we want to put SAP in AWS. Unfortunately, their design was simply a ‘lift and shift’ with very little cost saving.”**

In the months that followed, Arwel talked to a number of prospective suppliers.

“The biggest challenge was finding a partner that knew both AWS and SAP and could offer a competitive solution,” says Arwel. **“We eventually found SAP on AWS specialists, Lemongrass, who gave us a good price and loads of experience – in fact they were the first people to put an SAP production system into AWS.”**

Princes needs to upgrade connectivity to support an AWS deployment

Of course it's all very well putting your live SAP environment in the cloud but you've got to be able to guarantee that all of your users – wherever they happen to be in the world – are able to access the system; you also need resilience to ensure the business can continue operating if any part of the network fails.

“FluidOne is our incumbent MSP/comms partner and has been for a good five years,” says Arwel. **“We started talking to FluidOne about needing comms into AWS and into our Dublin site with failover back to Princes in London.”**

“I specified what I wanted at a high level – I said, I need sufficient bandwidth, I need resilient connectivity and I need a circuit into our DR centre – FluidOne did the rest.”

FluidOne delivers high bandwidth, resilient network for less cost

The new network provides diverse connectivity to Prince's primary AWS instance in Dublin with redundant failover to the company's disaster recovery centre in London. FluidOne delivered the technical design authority for the architecture along with project management, engineering and provisioning services for the three Colt 50Mbps circuits that comprise the new wide area network (WAN).

"Many years ago, we put 4mb circuits into our data centres but 50mb is now the entry level and it's actually cheaper," says Arwel. **"We're expanding our SAP landscape and we're going to need more bandwidth so 50mb seemed the logical choice."**

SAP migration to Amazon Web Services completed in less than one day

Arwel's team had just 24 hours to complete the physical migration from Princes' hosted SAP environment to AWS.

"The migration was a clean break," says Arwel. **"We switched off on Saturday and were back up on Sunday. AWS's flexibility minimised downtime to the business using a method that cost us a few hundred pounds that traditionally would've cost hundreds of thousands. It was a game changer."**

"FluidOne did a great job of coordinating with AWS, our new SAP partner – Lemongrass, and outgoing suppliers to plug into the new infrastructure" says Arwel.

"Although most of the savings are on the AWS side, we have made a slight saving by switching to a different carrier."

Performance doubled and cost halved with AWS cloud

It's been a few months since Princes completed the move to AWS so Arwel and his team have now had a chance to experience some of the benefits the project has delivered.

"The most notable outcome is that we've double our SAP performance and halved the cost," says Arwel. **"That's made a big difference to the business and allowed people to be more productive. Instead of sitting at the hourglass when reports are being run, reports are now instant."**

Whilst it's true that most of the benefits of the SAP migration have come from AWS, Arwel is happy to point out FluidOne's contribution, he says, **"From FluidOne's point of view we've now got the bandwidth that can deliver performance that provides big benefits to the business."**

AWS savings reinvested in systems development and resource

Deploying SAP on Amazon Web Services was a project with far reaching consequences for Princes' business. For its users, the deployment has increased the performance and availability of mission critical applications, whilst for IT services, it's given the company greater agility and flexibility for the development of new systems. It's also generated a six-figure annual saving that Princes is already reinvesting to improve IT and operational efficiency even more.

“Yes, we have made savings, but we’re using those savings to invest in the environment instead of just running it. From the 50% we saved on running costs, we’ve invested half into automation tools and having an extra head to deal with developing systems,” says Arwel.

Princes moved SAP to AWS at a cost of £300,000 and, in spite of its decision to reinvest half of the annual savings resulting from the project, Arwel still expects to see a return on investment in under 12 months.

Princes partners with FluidOne again to embrace wider adoption of hybrid cloud

With the successful migration of SAP under his belt, one of Arwel's next projects is to take Princes' back office systems into the hybrid cloud.

“We’re currently working with FluidOne to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of various communications technologies to complement our wider adoption of services into the hybrid cloud,” says Arwel.

Whilst this next project may not offer the same business advantages as AWS, it's still an important component of Princes' applications strategy and is still heavily dependent on communications for user access so Arwel is pleased to have FluidOne on-board.

“FluidOne has a consistent approach, they’re resilient and we work as a solid team – that’s what you need from a comms partner when you’re running your business in the cloud,” says Arwel.

FluidOne

We design, deploy and manage the networks on which our customers run their businesses in an increasingly digital world. Our hybrid networks will help customers digitalise their businesses

The best price possible

Our hybrid networks, enhanced by SD-WAN, blend carriers and technologies to optimise the price of every site, and minimise installation cost with zero touch deployment. We offer transparent pricing for peace of mind.

The fastest deployment

Our hybrid networks let you choose circuits that deliver fastest for each site, and our 4G WAN circuits offer 2 day delivery with seamless transition to permanent circuits.

The easiest migration

We can phase your migrations to suit you, minimising cost and hassle.

The best performance and uptime

Our advanced monitoring shows the whole application path, raise 95% of key issues proactively and allows detailed reporting and drill-down to show issues and long-term trends.

The most enjoyable and pain free experience

Our end to end digital systems and processes deliver Right first time with clear, accurate bills.