INDUSTRY
Retail & E-commerce

TECHNOLOGIES
Assessment of various cloud platform technologies.

BUSINESS NEED
A major online retailer needed advice on vendor selection for a public cloud platform.

SOLUTION
Pythian provided strategic, vendor-agnostic business and technical consulting.

RESULT
The retailer is confident in their choice of cloud platform—and has negotiated the best deal to meet their unique needs.

MAJOR ONLINE RETAILER ADOPTS A CLOUD-FIRST STRATEGY WITH THE HELP OF PYTHIAN CLOUD CONSULTING

To improve the efficiency of delivering new service features, a US$2 billion major online retailer decided to migrate their two very large on-premises data centers to the public cloud. Because of the high estimated spend—US$60 million to US$100 million over 5 years—and the considerable transformation efforts required, they realized the vital importance of choosing the right cloud platform.

The retailer wanted to weigh all the options available from cloud providers based on performance, price, ROI and other factors. They needed an advisor with extensive experience in migration planning, execution and negotiation with all the major cloud vendors, but with no vested interest in any of them: the advisor had to be vendor-agnostic.

The required strategic consulting needed to examine the retailer's cloud readiness, include a cloud planning assessment and develop a migration strategy, while considering both business and technical issues. The retailer also needed to know what to expect in terms of support at the various levels of professional services offered by the cloud vendors.

SOLUTION

Pythian was uniquely qualified to provide the required consulting. With unrivaled experience in migration planning, Pythian is a partner to multiple cloud vendors, but not a reseller. This ensured a vendor-agnostic approach.

Pythian experts explained that the on-premises architecture should not be simply replicated on the cloud because this would not set them up for either short-term or long-term success. While the retailer has been utilizing bare-metal servers on-premises, they were unique as they

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had a considerably strong DevOps engineering mindset and a very capable technical team. Given their configuration, several cloud native constructs and frameworks were not inherent to their environment, and would be somewhat of a paradigm shift for some of their operational methods. So, instead of a "lift-and-shift" approach, the answer was to develop a multi-faceted service-oriented migration strategy.

The goal was to minimize changes in order to speed the migration, but to make changes that would optimize operations and reduce costs. For example, the cloud storage options available from the cloud vendors being considered were much more cost-effective than self-hosted/self-managed storage servers. Pythian advised that, by changing the application code slightly, the retailer could move all their static assets hosted on their internal file servers to the corresponding serverless object storage offering by the winning cloud vendor. This is a small yet impactful example of taking a service-oriented migration strategy approach to ease the migration efforts as well as reduce migration, operational and maintenance costs that would have been incurred had they just lifted-and-shifted their existing file storage servers to the cloud. In addition to providing a report of migration considerations and cloud optimizations, Pythian experts attended the vendor presentations and provided feedback to the retailer. Pythian also advised on business considerations the retailer should negotiate with the vendors, including:

- Deprecation policies for end of services (ample notice required)

- Service level agreements

- Data protection standards to meet various country/regional policies

- Terms for contract auto-renewal/termination

- Pricing discounts and credits based on ongoing cloud hosting

- Training and support

- Provided guidance with respect to making sure that the right questions were asked

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RESULT

Pythian's business consulting in tandem with technical expertise provided the retailer with information about optimizations possible in the cloud, a strategic migration approach and the pros and cons of each public cloud platform. In the end, they made the best selection based on the performance, flexibility and cost control capabilities they needed. The retailer is now confident that their cloud strategy and vendor choice will meet their needs.

ABOUT PYTHIAN

Founded in 1997, Pythian is a global IT company that helps businesses adopt disruptive technologies to advance innovation and increase agility. Our consulting, implementation and managed services solutions help businesses realize value from their data assets, accelerate software delivery and enjoy more reliable, scalable IT systems.

Pythian's elite global teams of technology-enabled experts have access to nearly 20 years of searchable documented work, allowing them to solve problems and implement solutions more efficiently and with better results.

Our clients are businesses whose IT systems drive their revenues. They include SaaS, media, gaming, financial services and e-commerce companies around the world.

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