



CASE STUDY

Europ Assistance Belgium innovates for the future by embracing cloud technology

Business situation: Decentralized IT leads to capacity and cost issues

Founded in 1963, Europ Assistance is a world leader in providing insurance and assistance services, meeting a variety of customer demands in both critical and everyday life situations. The group specializes in assisting people with various travel, driving, family and health care needs.

Europ Assistance Belgium employs 240 people and is one of the oldest offices in the global group network. It has a decentralized IT strategy for its global network, with applications and infrastructure built specifically for its local divisions hosted in onsite datacenters. Originally, Europ Assistance's Belgian office operated 120 servers on-premises, leading to significant issues such as capacity limitations, high maintenance costs, cooling problems and security threats.

To lower costs, expand data storage capacity and improve IT security, the company decided to migrate its data into the cloud rather than investing in new on-site infrastructure. Michel Kennis, ICT director at Europ Assistance, was the architect behind the initiative, recognizing the importance of making the company future-ready.

As Europ Assistance Belgium did not have enough manpower or in-house expertise to manage the cloud infrastructure itself, it recognized the need for dedicated specialists to guide it along its digital transformation.

"The value of IT is enabling business, not managing infrastructure. We made the choice to stop losing time and money in infrastructure and partner up with Avanade, a trusted organization capable of managing our cloud infrastructure. This allows us to free up time to focus on our core business," says Kennis.

Solution: Cloud strategy to migrate and modernize all applications

Prior to selecting a solution partner, Europ Assistance chose to leverage Microsoft Azure as its preferred cloud platform due to its scalability and fully integrated set of IaaS and PaaS capabilities, which complement the company's on-premises systems.

"Azure is an ecosystem that lets you benefit from standardization and industrialization. The richness of the platform creates business opportunities. With the Azure expertise and experience of Avanade, we were able to immediately realize business benefits," says Kennis.

Because of the decentralized nature of its cloud migration strategy, Europ Assistance uses a local Azure Cloud infrastructure subscription for each of its country divisions, including Belgium.

After a cloud readiness assessment, Avanade was chosen as the right vendor for this project. Our in-depth knowledge of Azure and expertise in managed services were key factors in this selection.

"We got to know Avanade as a partner who made a clear choice in what they want to be good at. In my experience, a focused partner – with deep expertise – proves to be a better partner. You don't want to be caught with generalist service providers. Avanade's engineers really breathe Azure," Kennis explains.

In addition to our Azure expertise, Europ Assistance recognized Avanade as specialists within the Microsoft technology ecosystem. Combined with 24x7 availability, the company was confident that we could help accelerate its business, reduce costs, improve security and increase agility through this engagement.

"If we had to do the migration ourselves, we would not have started yet. While Europ Assistance Belgium has a great team, we just don't have the right resources, nor the right expertise with Azure." Europ Assistance was satisfied with how Avanade's team showed a professional attitude throughout the project. "With Avanade, experts are there for you through every step of the process. It was never an "us" and "them" story. We are on this digital journey together, which is the key for success," says Kennis.

Avanade initiated the project with a successful cloud transformation workshop with key stakeholders in Belgium. As part of this process, our team performed an Application Roadmap to Cloud (ARC) assessment to develop a strategy for the migration and modernization of all existing applications. This cloud

assessment gave the company an in-depth roadmap and steps required for its transformation journey. Avanade recommended the Azure Site Recovery Service be used to migrate the workload to a full Azure IaaS infrastructure.

The complete project consists of two parts: the infrastructure migration to the cloud and the setup of managed services. Europ Assistance Belgium's cloud transformation journey kicked off with the migration of its on-premises datacenter infrastructure. Over the next few years, Avanade will provide the company with managed services to ensure the new cloud platform operates smoothly, maintaining security and proactively monitoring for issues. The migration of additional critical business applications, such as call center telephone systems, is scheduled in an additional phase.

Results: Early benefits include employee flexibility, proper forecasting and quicker response

Avanade and Europ Assistance Belgium have completed the basic infrastructure migration to the cloud, and the client is already seeing benefits for its employees, including the ability to telecommute. Additionally, continuous monitoring

of the cloud infrastructure helps with proper forecasting and offers the ability to react quickly during peak times throughout the year.

The cloud migration in Belgium is a fundamental step towards Europ Assistance's larger digital transformation journey, and it will allow the company to become more agile and innovative. "I believe we now have all the building blocks for the future. IT and business should now come up with ideas to innovate," says Kennis.

Going forward, Avanade and Europ Assistance Belgium have begun planning how the company can further exploit the ecosystem for other areas of the business. Europ Assistance is eager to add more automation and digitization – such as virtual agents – in its future operations.

Avanade's approach complements Europ Assistance's decentralized way of working, and we will continue our successful partnership by supporting all of its European divisions with cloud migration and managed services.

About Europ Assistance

Europ Assistance monitors more than 300 million people around the world. With 8200 employees and 44 local companies highly active locally, the Group has a network of service providers that is very close to the customers.

For more information visit <http://www.europ-assistance.be>.



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Our professionals bring bold, fresh thinking combined with technology, business and industry expertise to help fuel transformation and growth for our clients and their customers. Avanade has 30,000 digitally connected people across 24 countries, bringing clients the best thinking through a collaborative culture that honors diversity and reflects the communities in which we operate. Majority owned by Accenture,

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