



CASE STUDY

European water utility lowers operational costs by 65% with a move to the cloud

Azure Integration Services increases platform stability, scalability and performance

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Water is a precious, life-sustaining resource – a fact not lost on one European water utility. When it foresaw that its legacy system would soon be limiting its ability to do business, the company found an innovative, future-driven solution in the cloud.

Business situation

System downtime disrupts business continuity

This nonprofit water utility company supplies 112 billion liters of purified drinking water to 1.7 million customers annually. For years, the company used Microsoft BizTalk and Windows Communication Foundation to provide enterprise integration throughout its application landscape. This service allowed internal business divisions, external vendors and customers to exchange data in order to run crucial front- and back-end processes. But as the company began to provide more innovative customer services, these systems could not keep up. They lacked the ability to scale and came with high licensing, hardware and maintenance costs.

As a result, the company faced significant challenges in terms of business continuity and the stability of its integration platform. For example, it did not want to risk customers being unable to log into its site to self-report or access water usage information because of unavailable systems integration. It also needed to ensure that internal users, like the finance department, were not disrupted and could initiate payment and other business-critical processes on a reliable enterprise services system. It knew it had to act to keep up to speed with its growing digital services.

After considering its options, the company decided that expanding its on-premises hardware would be expensive and only delay its underlying stability issues. Instead, it chose to move this service to the cloud to gain greater speed, scalability, availability, security and flexibility. And the company selected Accenture and Avanade – a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft – to help it accelerate this journey.

Solution

Integrating apps with Microsoft Azure

Starting with a proof of concept, Accenture and Avanade worked with the company to identify the best platform for helping the company increase stability and scale. More specifically, we “proved” the feasibility of the Microsoft Azure platform by showing how it handled some of the most complex integrations. The company quickly determined that Microsoft Azure Integration Services (AIS) could provide the necessary enterprise integration landscape the company needed to connect its various applications and services while also reducing its operational costs.

We then built the solution, equipping the company with a toolbox of components for integrating both on-premises and cloud-based applications, data and processes across the enterprise. Notable features include:

- API management for publication and consumption
- Logic Apps for orchestration and transformation
- Service Bus for reliable messaging and Event Grid for real-time notifications
- Storage for large file support and Azure functions for custom development

AIS was a natural fit for the company's broader Azure migration efforts, especially since BizTalk specialists are not easily found on the market. With a cloud-native landscape, it could ensure a more consistent and innovative future.

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Results

Lowering costs by 65%

By rebuilding its integration landscape with AIS, the company increased platform stability, scalability, reliability and performance. It reduced downtime to almost none, assuring customers access to digital services whenever they need them. The consumption-based model also helped lower the company's operational costs by 65% and take unnecessary pressure off the company's call center. Across the enterprise, AIS empowers employees with quicker, more standardized and stable workflow processes so they can focus more on providing customers with safe, ample water supply.

About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. Our professionals bring bold, fresh thinking combined with technology, business and industry expertise to help make a human impact on our clients, their customers and their employees. We are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Avanade has 39,000 professionals in 25 countries, bringing clients our best thinking through a collaborative culture that honors diversity and reflects the communities in which we operate. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation.

Learn more at www.avanade.com

About Accenture

Accenture is a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries, we offer Strategy and Consulting, Interactive, Technology and Operations services — all powered by the world's largest network of Advanced Technology and Intelligent Operations centers. Our 537,000 people deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity every day, serving clients in more than 120 countries. We embrace the power of change to create value and shared success for our clients, people, shareholders, partners and communities.

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