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How does the most successful kiwifruit marketer of the world accommodate sustainable global growth? Maybe the most magic decision Zespri took to realize growth plans, is moving 100 percent of its IT infrastructure into the Microsoft Azure cloud. The main benefit of cloud technology is freeing the company to focus on its core business, instead of IT. This strategy forced the move of the SAP systems to Microsoft Azure, and hence an important decision urged itself with regard to the business-critical on premise BizTalk Server based integration solution. Zespri chose to move integrations to Integration Cloud, which is a Microsoft Azure-based based Integration (iPAAS) platform.

The awakening: just when you are not the captain of your soul

On its way to its goal to double sales and triple revenues by 2025, the Zespri global business was disrupted by a sequence of unfortunate events. In only the first quarter of 2011, the company had to overcome both a deadly virus that devastated New Zealand growers' crops and major earthquakes events in New Zealand and Japan.

Disaster resilience

However Zespri had adopted a distributed IT environment, most servers were located in Mount Maunganui in New Zealand. The management realized it had to provide a much higher degree of disaster resilience to better guarantee operational continuity. "Zespri, our suppliers, and partners, rely on the free flow of information to deliver great service to our customers. Integration is at the heart of the Zespri eco-system" says Andrew Goodin, Global Manager Information Systems at Zespri.

Scalability

Could Zespri easily deal with these kinds of ups and downs? Was the business as flexible to scale down in a low market and easily scale up when growth was picking up? How easily did operations adjust to the seasonal, cyclic peaks in volume, that are typical for a fresh fruit business? "We found our ability to predict integration load was difficult in our on premise solution and looked to over scale to compensate" says Andrew Goodin.

Distress decision: 100% of the IT Infrastructure into Azure

Zespri decided to move its entire server workload to Microsoft Azure. Also their SAP-based ERP system has been migrated to Azure. With this, Zespri realized the on premise integration platform that was in place required an important redesign as well. The existing BizTalk Server also had to connect to external SaaS applications, the SAP system on Microsoft Azure and several other systems of which some were still running in the on-premises data centers. This situation required an innovative Hybrid Integration approach.

“With our infrastructure migration to Azure we took the decision to look at Integration as a Service. Zespri has had a long term relationship with Codit and they were a logical and trusted partner to take our next step of our cloud journey. With Azure, Codit and the Integration Cloud we are able to right size the integration and increase or reduce as needed – giving us greater ability to meet business expectations” says Andrew Goodin.

Azure-based Integration Cloud platform

Codit has implemented the Azure-based Integration Cloud Platform (iPAAS). Designed to set up connections and integrations quickly and most efficiently, it uses a reliable and transparent cloud environment. This 24/7 managed platform liberates Zespri from the technical implementation, monitoring and troubleshooting.

The solution for Zespri included an upgrade from an existing BizTalk Server solution (based on BizTalk Server 2010), and more. Sam Vanhoutte, CTO of Codit explains: “We took BizTalk Server 2013 R2, moved it to Azure Virtual Machines and made it stateless. We leveraged Service Bus relay to make it high available and we extended the solution, using Service Bus messaging in combination with Azure SQL Database and Azure Search. This setup allows users to get visibility into the platform.”

Connected business, around the world

With Integration Cloud, Zespri connects to various industry-specific SaaS platforms, their Azure-based ERP system (SAP) and existing internal applications. All of this was redesigned with the modern-cloud in mind.

This new integration solution enables Zespri to automate its supply chain more efficiently. With containers traveling by ship for weeks before the kiwifruit arrives at the ports

on the other side of the world, all container planning – including smart temperature settings for the ripening of the kiwifruit just in time – is communicated over the Azure platform. Expenses of the traveling workforce are integrated through Integration Cloud. The communication with business partners is implemented on this cloud-based solution. All in all, the new Azure-based integration platform allows Zespri to be connected with their partners, employees and customers around the world.



Trusted Partnership

The Regional European Zespri Team had already implemented a very successful e-Invoicing solution via the Integration Cloud platform. The success of this implementation warranted a global evaluation of an integration platform, as Zespri looked to increase its footprint into the Cloud. Zespri needed a partner that would continue the enablement of its Global Integration Strategy to the Cloud. “It was obvious that Codit could easily meet the needs of Global Zespri, given the secure, scalable, stable and positive experience of the European implementation. More importantly Zespri values partner relationships, Codit has become a key trusted partner that understands our business goals and needs, the choice was easy” – Raj Kant Zespri Regional Information System Manager.

Zespri in numbers

- Zespri is organised in a rather distinctive way. The Zespri group (Zespri Group Limited) is owned by some **3650 kiwifruit orchardists (of which 2450 New Zealand growers)**, who take care of the cultivation of Zespri Kiwifruit.
- **\$1,349 billion** kiwifruit sales in 2013/2014
- In 2013, **97.3 million trays** of kiwifruit



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Global kiwifruit sales marketed by Zespri

2013: \$1,349 billion



2011: \$1,620 billion



2009: \$1,510 billion



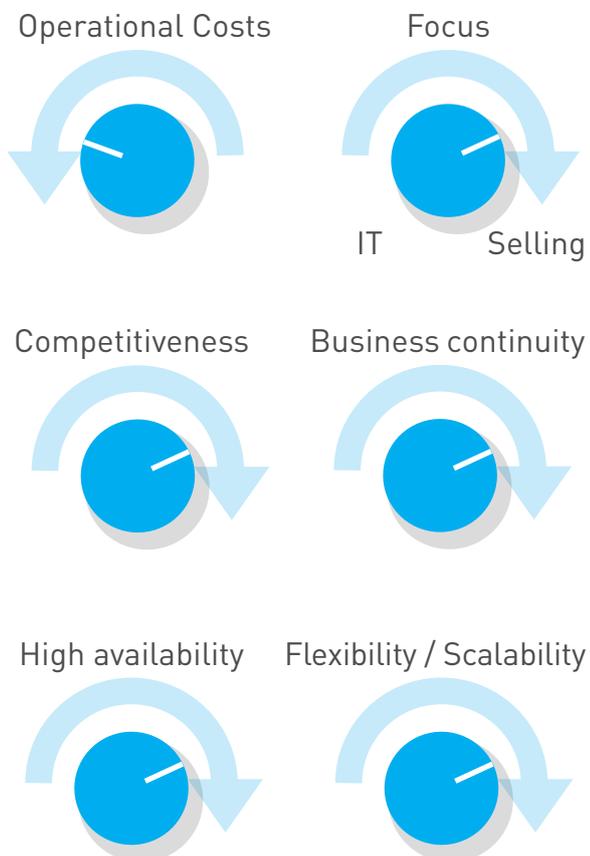
2007: \$1,164 billion



2005: \$991 billion



Benefits of integration in the cloud





Benefits

Operational cost savings

The Azure-based Integration Cloud crosses out licenses costs to implement the solution. Neither does it require investments in hardware, networking or any installations upfront.

Focus on selling kiwifruit, instead of IT

Moving the integration solution to the cloud frees Zespri to focus on selling kiwifruit, instead of IT. A team of experts takes care of implementing, hosting, running and supporting the processes, while Zespri can focus on added value tasks. Outsourcing the responsibility allows Zespri to stay in control of its budget without platform or maintenance costs, while preserving a high quality of service.

Competitiveness

The flexibility of a business also lies in its lead time to react to new business opportunities. To set the pace ahead of competition, Zespri wanted to significantly speed up the time it needed to integrate with new business partners. With the Azure-based Integration Cloud solution, setting up a new interface compliant to the policies of both parties, became a matter of hours.

“Integration cloud is fantastic, it allows us to scale easily and exceed customer needs. New integrations now take hours rather than days. The Codit team have the expertise and skills to assist Zespri to be even more responsive to customer needs. In a fresh fruit business, responsiveness and service are essential to staying ahead of your competition – Integration Cloud assists Zespri in doing this.”

Andrew Goodin
Global Manager Information
Systems at Zespri.

Business continuity

Typical of the Azure cloud technology is its high availability, running processes at geo-clustered cloud scale against redundant storage. As the integration solution is the core of the business operations, the central point through which all data gets communicated, running it on Azure guarantees the continuity of the worldwide business.

Flexibility

Integration Cloud comes exactly with the elasticity and scalability that the global kiwifruit marketer needs. It allows Zespri to anticipate or instantly react to peaks in processing load, and scale the integration platform to its needs.

Conclusion

About their decision to move the entire IT Infrastructure to (Azure) cloud, Andrew Goodin concluded: “The opportunity around cloud allows Zespri to leverage the best people around the world, such as Codit for integration.”

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