British Bank Cuts OpEx by 28 Percent and Accelerates Time-to-market by 36 Percent

▶ Case Study

Overview
Powering wealth management services

A 350-year-old British bank with a net worth of $550 million, primarily catering to high-net-worth customers, needed to optimize its comprehensive wealth management platform to help financial advisors save time, strengthen customer relationships, and bring in more business. An urgent upgradation of the platform was needed.

Zensar's brief:

- Deploy a solution to simplify and standardize
  - complex application releases (that make rollouts and rollbacks difficult) and tool maintenance, and
  - inconsistencies across development, stage, and production environments.
- Create pipelines for building and deploying applications into the Kubernetes cluster without manual intervention.
- Address issues related to inadequate documentation and poor version control.

Beyond the brief:

We designed the solution based on six key architecture principles:

1. **Low lock-in:** Ensure minimal vendor-controlled surface and pre-emptive exit strategy.
2. **Hyper rationalization:** Enable maximum utilization of billable resources.
3. **Low maintenance:** Use managed services when not in conflict with (1).
4. **Reliability:** Apply high availability and "design for failure" tools and techniques.
5. **Security:** Honor existing security controls.
6. **SDLC acceleration:** Accelerate lead time of applications, when not in conflict with (4) and (5).

Challenges
Lacking the agility to compete effectively

The client's IT department had to rapidly modernize the bank's obsolete platform to keep pace with the evolving banking industry, by enabling faster rollout of new services and features and higher application availability and scalability.

Solution
Modernizing the wealth management platform

We deployed a solution with a three-pronged approach:

Consult:
- Consult on the technology stack and new ways of working.
- Enhance the performance of the Operations Support team with
  - greater morale, enabled by the proven RPG Happiness Framework, and
  - improved processes and workflows.
- Plan the evolution of the IT environment with new cloud and container options.

Build:

- Develop a strategic roadmap for cloud and container adoption, including K8s implementation, security, and scaling.
- Use intelligent automation to onboard online and mobile banking applications onto the cloud and container environment.
- Channel digital application pipelines into AWS, using code build and code pipeline services to minimize CI/CD maintenance.
- Adopt EaC design, with the right toolset choices.
- Enable data persistence, using the AWS Systems Manager service.

Operate:

- Provide developer, operations, and infrastructure support.
- Ensure broad-based adoption of the new platform.
- Support IaC through the SDLC.
- Use AWS Elastic Kubernetes Service (EKS) to achieve
  - environmental consistency,
  - high application availability,
  - zero downtime, and
  - easy application scalability.
- Store all the environment infrastructure state files in the S3 backend.

Solution enablers

- **Amazon EKS** made it simpler to run and manage applications built from containers.
- **Amazon S3** enabled industry-leading scalability, data availability, security, and performance.
- **Amazon Systems Manager** enabled efficient end-to-end management of cloud resources.
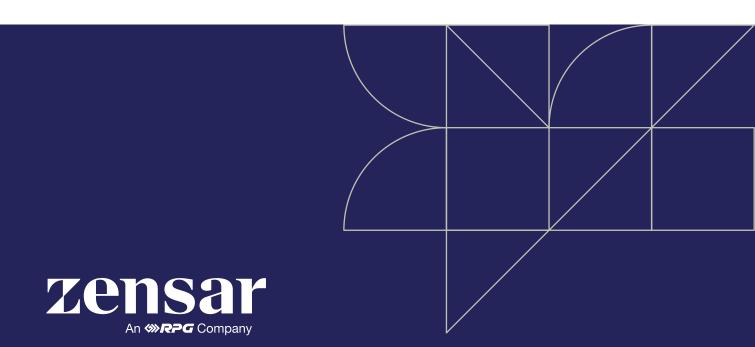
Impact
Greater agility and cost-effectiveness

- 90 percent of the system built with infra and config as code
- 28 percent OpEx reduced with costs consolidated under one platform
- 36 percent faster time-to-market enabled by reduced patching time activity

Business outcomes:

The solution delivered greater business agility, enabled by streamlined usage of resources, reduced maintenance cost, and minimal manual eff¬ort in triggering application pipelines and deployment. Additionally, the client experienced greater application reliability due to improved consistency of the environment states.

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