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British Retailer Embarks on Modernization **With Clarity and Confidence**

Case Study

Overview

Paving the way forward

A leading British retailer, with 364 stores across the UK and an annual revenue of USD 15 billion, was facing the challenges of an aging workforce and mainframe licensing cost escalations. It wanted to cut its mainframe footprint and achieve on-prem data center exit to GCP.

The retailer partnered with Zensar for mainframe modernization, a critical part of the data center exit that addresses these key concerns:

- TCO reduction, given the spiraling costs of mainframe software and managing legacy infrastructure.
- Maintainability, due to the shrinking talent pool for legacy tech and the risk of needing large app rewrite projects.
- Velocity, as long timeframes are required to transform apps to new platforms.

Zensar's brief:
Conduct proof-of-value (POV) and create a blueprint for phase-wise migration, covering these key components:

- Application and infrastructure inventory with detailed dependency mapping
- Target landing zone for mainframe applications as well as target state options (treatment plan) for mainframe applications
- High-level migration plan and cost-benefit analysis report

Beyond the brief:
With the goal of enabling a seamless solution experience, we provided four additional components:

- Business traceability matrix
- Enhanced application inventory
- Human interaction report
- Discrepancies report

Challenges

Navigating the complexities of migration

The client's IT team had to content with multiple challenges:

- **Information gaps:** A clear picture is required to group apps, databases, and workloads into ecosystems and apply the correct migration treatment. But the lack of detailed, actionable insights from previous assessments compromised the team's ability to make changes and enhancements.

- **Safety and stability:** Mainframe apps are business critical and there was a high degree of risk involved in migration of legacy apps due to insufficient knowledge and documentation. Plus, applications with no available source code or mapping made it a challenge to create an optimized footprint and exit the on-prem data center by 2026.

- **Time and cost:** Applications had to be migrated off mainframe by 2025, as it was going out of support. This was a complex task due to the monolithic structure of the applications. Moreover, the mainframe costs to the company were substantial.

Solution

Discover, analyze, and modernize

Leveraging a 16-year history of working together with the client, where we've supported 100+ apps, we set up a joint mainframe application assessment squad to enable the modernization and migration effort. The squad included our mainframe SMEs, GCP architects, application SMEs, support teams, and domain experts.

Planning AS-IS assessment: Having a 360-degree view of the application assessment is very critical for a successful modernization, as minimizing unknowns and surprises during the execution paves the path for a smooth migration experience. We planned an AS-IS assessment that covered various aspects of infrastructure, business, applications, data, and cost.

Analyzing the application portfolio: Next, we analyzed the entire stack of mainframe applications, by employing

- tools such as CAST Imaging to collect on-prem inventory data to be mapped to the cloud,
- workshops with application and infrastructure owners to gather insights and understand the existing environment, and
- expert studies to review and analyze existing documentation, such as network diagrams and configuration files, to supplement the collected information.

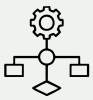
Furnishing our findings and recommendations: We consolidated our analysis, leveraging proprietary tools to inform the process: ZenSight Framework, ZenHance Reference architecture, and ZenTCO calculator. Finally, we fortified the modernization process with a comprehensive set of deliverables:

- **Business traceability matrix:** We grouped applications by mapping apps to business processes to identify treatment options for all the applications, an implementation plan, and an overall mainframe exit strategy.
- **Enhanced application inventory:** This included tools and options used in the Z/OS environment and their mapping options in the target state.
- **Human interaction report:** The report included ad hoc updates on applications to understand the need and provision an equivalent option in the target state.
- **Discrepancies report:** The report covered missing sources, duplicates, and other inconsistencies that we identified, allowing for proper remediation before beginning the modernization process.

- **Final recommendations:** This included cloud fitment analysis, cloud viability analysis, security controls and compliance analysis, target landing zones, migration strategies, a high-level phase-wise migration plan, and target cloud and data center architecture. Also, having completed the POV, one for rehosting and another for refactoring, we provided a blueprint for the entire migration.

Solution snapshot

Challenges	Lack of complete visibility
	Finite timelines
	Focus on modernization rather than lift and shift
	Cost implications

Planning	 Automated discovery	 Manual validation for complete visibility
Discovery and validation	 Industry best practices framework for analysis and modernization	 6R strategy with focus on refactoring
	 Performance analysis	 Zensar's industry best practices for cloud and DC reference architecture
Analysis and recommendation	 DR/BCP strategy as part of the architecture	 Cost-effective solution for TCO reduction

Outcomes	Automated and manual base discovery
	Complete visibility of the environment, searchable repository
	Dependency mapping – apps-to-infra mapping, app dependency
	High-availability architecture

Impact

Greater business confidence

The detailed phase-wise migration program is poised to

- eliminate 4000MIPS across 47 applications of mainframe workload,
- provide a factory model for the transformation path, and
- enable a multi-year business and IT transformation journey.

Business outcomes: The solution removed the element of uncertainty for the client, providing clarity on the way forward with a financial and strategic plan for its IT estate and a clear value realization and spend profile for each year.

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