

CASE STUDY

KMD Brands



INDUSTRY

Retail – Outdoor Goods
and Clothing

KEY OUTCOME

Orchestrated migration
to AWS Cloud

KMD Brands summits AWS Cloud

In the battle for market share, hyperscale cloud providers are using assistance programmes to entice new customers. The AWS Migration Acceleration Program (MAP) is one example. However, independent cloud experts, such as Leaven, continue to play a critical role in the ultimate success of cloud adoption and downstream modernisation.

Leading outdoor, lifestyle and sports company, KMD Brands, is adopting a cloud-first strategy to support its global expansion. Working with Leaven, the multinational is migrating to AWS Cloud to build a consolidated technology environment that will equip it with more agility, simplified connectivity, and reduced budget management overheads.

KMD Brands, formerly known as Kathmandu Holdings, is a leading retailer and global enterprise focused on outdoor recreation, lifestyle, and sporting goods. It encompasses three distinct brands: Kathmandu, Rip Curl, and Oboz. KMD Brands today includes 280 retail stores in Australia and New Zealand. It has a network of physical and online stores, and wholesale operations across the UK, US, Europe, South America and Southeast Asia.



“Leaven excelled. We built trusted relationships with the technicians performing the migration and highly recommend Leaven’s management team. Their oversight and delivery of agreed project outcomes was professional and accurate.”

“Leaven’s flexible approach to partnerships and understanding of our internal resource capabilities supported a multi-varied approach to project delivery.”

Aidan O’Connor
IT Infrastructure Manager
A/NZ, Kathmandu

THE CHALLENGE

KMD Brands had set its sights on a cloud-first strategy. Mostly, however, the retailer wanted a technology platform to help its business adapt and change quickly. It saw the need to consolidate systems supporting KMD Brands’ three retail companies as a natural starting point.

The company’s 2018 acquisition of North American outdoor footwear brand Oboz and, in the year following, iconic surf wear label Rip Curl and streetwear store Ozmosis, delivered a significant boost to KMD Brands’ global presence.

This growth prompted KMD Brands to undertake an architectural redesign to establish a new IT framework for its current and future global expansion.

“We needed IT environments that were compatible and managed centrally,” Aidan O’Connor, IT Infrastructure Manager for KMD Brands’ A/NZ region, said. “Consolidation was a big driver – from a management and cost point of view we wanted to reduce the number of vendors we worked with to drive economies of scale and reduce management overhead. So, we wanted AWS to be the primary platform to build group-level solutions and access and centralise integrations.”



THE SOLUTION

Kathmandu is no cloud novice. The retailer had run environments in AWS for seven-plus years, along the way modernising much of its core IT infrastructure in the cloud. This work established an AWS landing zone for the staged migration of business applications and development work.

At this point, AWS flagged the opportunity to access best practice processes available through the vendor's partner initiative, called AWS Migration Acceleration Program (MAP). AWS introduced accredited migration partner Leaven to deliver the processes and lead the cloud migration project.

Leaven steered a three-phased programme, including an initial assessment of Kathmandu's IT topography to inform a broad strategy, followed by a mobilisation phase and the staged migration to AWS Cloud.

Taking advantage of AWS migration tools, training, and technical support made available through MAP, Leaven continues to work with Kathmandu to establish a strong operating foundation in AWS Cloud that aims to offset much of the retailer's initial investment in migration.

Leaven also worked with Kathmandu's wider project team to rearchitect elements of the retailer's existing Transit Gateway to maximise its native functionality. The gateway eliminates complex peering relationships, providing seamless access to Kathmandu's business applications across the retailer's international operations.

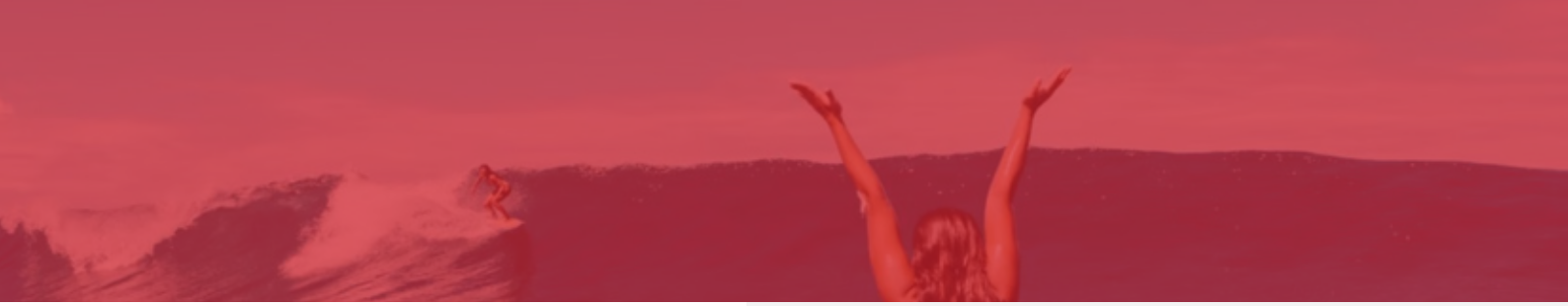
Kathmandu was then onboarded into the Managed Cloud Services of CCL, part of Spark Business Group. CCL's Managed Cloud Services combines a 24/7 team of cloud engineers with service desk support, optimisation, and observability to proactively monitor service consumption costs, security, and the overall health position of Kathmandu's AWS services.

THE BENEFITS

With the majority of its self-managed applications now running in AWS Cloud (at the time of writing), Kathmandu is moving to optimise its AWS infrastructure services and streamline billing and support.

Asked how Kathmandu's policy-hardened AWS platform helped the people who used it, O'Connor highlighted multiple benefits:

- Scaling compute is quick and easy: "We can spin up and shut down test and dev environments quickly," O'Connor said.
- AWS native services have set stage for modernisation: "It's not just about upgrading servers or adjusting memory and CPU. We're able to use AWS native services to run workloads in containers and in serverless mode, and use other AWS managed services, such as RDS (Relational Database Service)," O'Connor said.
- AWS network connectivity paves the way for group-level resource sharing: "Terminating connections at the AWS transit gateway has removed requirements for routing through complex networks and greatly improved the experience for users accessing globally shared applications," O'Connor said. "Sharing workloads across our regions is simplifying connectivity, improving performance and reliability, and reducing operational overheads."
- AWS reliability strengthens Kathmandu's confidence in IT: "AWS lives and dies by its reputation – keeping services alive is their foremost priority," O'Connor said. "Using a private cloud environment to match the resilience, stability, and development pathways available in the public cloud would be challenging."
- Working with CCL's Managed Services simplifies administration: "The single invoicing portal and centralised reporting provides a single point of truth that reduces budget management overheads," O'Connor said.



“Leaven’s uniquely collaborative working style meant the project ran smoothly. Projects can change more than you’d expect at the start, so you need the flexibility to pivot without a huge hassle. Leaven provided that flexibility.”

Aidan O’Connor
IT Infrastructure Manager
A/NZ, Kathmandu

WORKING WITH LEAVEN

Past experiences informed O’Connor’s view that traditional engagements are sometimes top-heavy with process and paperwork, complicating changes and new thinking as projects develop.

“We were looking for a partner who delivered a hybrid-style project methodology that was efficient but still maintained quality, without unnecessary formalities,” O’Connor said.

He wanted Leaven to both upskill Kathmandu’s internal IT team through hands-on work as the project progressed, and function as an integral part of Kathmandu’s IT infrastructure team for the duration of the project.

“Leaven was great. We built genuine relationships with their project team. They were flexible enough to respond to project scope changes that were in best interests of the project,” O’Connor said. “If you’re part of a virtual team, then you’re a team. We’re motivated to work with vendors and people who share the same ethos.”

About CCL & Leaven

CCL enables Aotearoa to adapt and thrive in a digital future by bringing home the best of global technology, delivered with true tech expertise and a Kiwi touch. Leaven is CCL’s cloud and business transformation business unit, helping organisations accelerate and succeed with cloud adoption, digital innovation, and business transformation.

Spark Business Group

