

CASE STUDY

MTF Finance



INDUSTRY

Financial and Insurance
Services

KEY OUTCOME

Microsoft Azure
Migration

Cloud Readiness Assessment sets stage for finance company's business transformation, with assessment roadmap pointing the way for MTF's Microsoft Azure migration.

Mature businesses continuing to run legacy IT systems see their future in the cloud. But when hundreds of applications are in play, scoping critical migration work can be a stumbling block. Which applications are ready to go? Which ones require development work? And how many others should be retired in favour of look-a-like cloud native applications? MTF Finance found the answers with Leaven's Cloud Readiness Assessment.

MTF Finance is a name familiar to many Kiwis who have borrowed money to buy a car. The 50-year-old lender built its reputation in the motor trade, providing car dealerships with a ready-to-go finance offering. More recently the company has established a national network of 47 franchised operators and introduced unsecured personal finance.



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Ashley Ross

cio

MTF Finance

But past success does not guarantee future prosperity. So, MTF Finance has launched a programme of work to develop new finance products and buying experiences for the next generation of digital-savvy customers.

This unfolding chapter put cloud front and centre.

Sizing up Microsoft Azure

Setting its sights on Microsoft Azure, MTF Finance engaged Leaven, the cloud transformation business unit of CCL, to establish a landing zone for a quick start on migration. Operating a security-hardened, policy-enforced Azure platform from the start ensured MTF Finance would avoid the pitfalls resulting from poor foundations.

Work established platform ‘guardrails’ to keep landing zone administrators and developers on track and compliant, covering operating standards, governance controls, shared platform network infrastructure, security and monitoring services, and automation to support the lender’s cloud journey.

“It’s easy to pitch applications to the cloud, but there are different ways to do the same things. There’s a right way and a way that can lead to some very big bills,” says Ashley Ross, MTF Finance CIO.

Under the spotlight: 130-plus applications

With Azure foundations in place, MTF Finance sought to gauge the readiness of its 130-plus applications for migration to Azure. While understanding how to get their applications up and running on Azure, the lender required a clear view of so-called ‘day-two’ practices – periphery tasks such as audits, compliance, financial reporting, and monitoring necessary to sustain cloud services and applications.

These mandatory but not necessarily value-added hygiene factors often have a greater bearing on cloud economics and the overall success of adoption.

MTF Finance was in a strong position to make its move to Azure. The lender’s core lending



Cloud Readiness R-Scale

- **Rehost:** Application ready 'as is' for cloud-hosted IaaS servers
- **Re-platform:** Application containerisation and cloud-native app services recommended
- **Replace:** Consider SaaS or other alternatives – typically file transfer, management, and support applications
- **Retain:** Applications unsuited to the cloud
- **Retire:** End of life and legacy applications

application, Sovereign, ran on a dedicated IBM hardware and software stack, and supporting infrastructure was largely virtualised on VMware, with most servers running on the Microsoft Windows Server operating system.

But questions remained concerning MTF Finance's future IT architecture and data management, and the broader implications for the lender's growing footprints in Azure.

"Leaven knows their stuff. It's easy to pitch applications to the cloud, but there are different ways to do the same things. There's a right way and a way that leads to some very big bills." Ashley Ross, CIO, MTF Finance

Ready for the cloud

Leaven's Cloud Readiness Assessment brings an expert eye to IT estates, helping organisations gauge their current cloud readiness, understand what a cloud adoption programme of work could look like, and identify critical next steps for successful cloud adoption.

Starting with a discovery process to verify the 'real world' workload and performance of MTF Finance servers, Leaven also drew on configuration and application data to build a picture of the organisation's IT estate.

Interviews with key IT stakeholders provided additional context related to MTF Finance business priorities, internal processes, vendor relationships, and roadmaps.

The assessment identified key opportunities and constraints MTF Finance was likely to face on their migration to Azure, with a set of recommendations charting the best way forward.

Taking flight with landing zone extensions

Designing a landing zone so that it can be readily extended to support new services and applications is critical to the success of cloud transformation projects.



Taking this step ensured MTF Finance was in a strong position to use containers, DevOps, and automated application deployment as they move to re-platform applications.

MTF Finance's experimentation with containerised applications demonstrated their potential for accelerated development cycles, highlighting the value of a container-based platform using the Azure Kubernetes Service (AKS).

The Azure Kubernetes Service presented multiple benefits. Leaven's assessment also recommended a data architecture to support continuous data processing and replication.

Large volumes of data tend to create natural performance bottlenecks during transfer and processing.

Cloud-native architectures address these constraints with continuous stream processing models and APIs for data exchange, which further encourage developers to move business logic from data stores to middleware or microservices.

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

