A Strategic Migration From On-Premises SQL Server To Azure SQL Managed Instance

Background

Charlie Bigham's is a prominent provider in the culinary space, renowned for crafting high-quality products using ethically sourced ingredients. Embracing the transformative power of good food, Charlie Bigham's endeavours to offer consumers convenient yet gourmet dining experiences in their homes.

As Charlie Bigham's has continued to drive innovation, the company recognised a need for strategic digital transformation to maintain competitive edge and improve operational efficiencies. As a key part of the project, Charlie Bigham's would migrate their mission-critical systems to the cloud, to align with the long-term vision for modernisation and cost optimisation.

As a long-standing client of WellData, Charlie Bigham's naturally approached us for support of their on-prem SQL Server to Azure SQL Managed Instance migration, due to the trust and solid working relationship developed over the years.

Charlie Bigham's initially reached out for backend support of their core enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, Syspro. The ERP was hosted on-premises and maintained by SysPro ERP partner - HIT Technology, who when searching for SQL Server experts, discovered WellData.

The Challenge

As needs changed, Charlie Bigham's business requirements have demanded more scalable and flexible infrastructure. Now, a broader digital transformation

to leverage cloud technology and create a modern, efficient workplace environment, created additional requirement for cloud consultancy support to ensure a smooth transition from their on-prem Syspro platform to Azure.

Motivations For Migration

Several factors influenced Charlie Bigham's decision to migrate to the cloud:

⚖️ Scalability and Flexibility: Futureproof systems against bottlenecks, resource limits, and costly upgrades.

💡 Innovation and Modernisation: Embrace technologies that are hard to integrate with traditional infrastructure

🐷 Cost Efficiency: Reduce capital expenses by converting to operational expenses with a pay-as-you-go model.

Charlie Bigham's chose WellData as part of the project due to its proven record of accomplishment with on-prem SQL Server to Azure SQL Managed Instance migrations. The established relationship with their team enabled complete confidence in WellData's ability to provide consultancy throughout.

Our ability to provide consultancy, plan for potential issues based on previous migration experiences, and ensure operational continuity were decisive factors. Unlike external contractors, WellData's long-standing partnership with Charlie Bigham's meant we had an in-depth understanding of their business, systems, and operational needs, providing trust and familiarity.

The Solution

While WellData did not lead the initial proposal for the Azure migration, our expertise became critical in delivering the solution. We provided: Consultancy and Expertise: Advising Charlie Bigham's and their partners on the most suitable Azure services for their database infrastructure.

Technical Architecture: Participating in design meetings and proposing how to stand-up development and test environments in Azure.

Supplier Integration: Working seamlessly with multiple partners, to ensure smooth integration of services.

Performance Optimisation: One key challenge during a cloud migration is to ensure optimal performance without incurring costs. When overnight processes took longer in Azure, we could recommend optimisations to balance performance without increasing costs.

Security and Compliance: Addressing security concerns, as cloud environments differ from on-premise in terms of security protocols and practices.
Ongoing Support: After the go-live phase, we remained on hand for post-migration support, ensuring a smooth settling period with dedicated aftercare.

The Results

The migration to Azure was a resounding success.

Cost Optimisation: Through careful planning and optimisation, Charlie Bigham avoided unforeseen expenses and maintained control over operating expenditure (OpEx).

Improved Flexibility: Charlie Bigham can scale as needed with their systems now in the cloud.

Operational Continuity: Detailed testing and performance checks carried out in advance, contributed to a seamless transition and minimal disruption to business operations.

Charlie Bigham's Azure migration was critical to its digital transformation journey. With WellData's expertise in SQL Server databases, seamless integration with third parties, and performance optimisation, the migration was completed on time and within budget, leaving Charlie Bigham's well-positioned to scale and grow in a cloud-first environment.

" *Following the recent completion of our ERP migration from on-premise to Microsoft Azure using SQL MI, WellData was integral to the success of this very strategic project. They provide my team with the technical leadership and resources for the SQL expertise we require. They are always there for us and attended all project meetings, workshops and catch-ups and would always jump on calls at a moment's notice – Well data are like an extension to my team, and we get on so well with all of them – they can't do enough for us.* " - Mike Calverley, Head of IT

If you're considering a move to the cloud, it's essential to have a partner with the experience and expertise to guide you through complexities of SQL Server databases. WellData has the insights to ensure your project succeeds.

Lessons and Best Practices for Your Azure Migration:

1) Plan for Performance Optimisation:

Azure's purchase models can lead to higher costs if systems are not optimised. It's all too easy to resolve performance issues, such as longer processing times, by increasing resources, but this increases costs.

It's crucial to strike a balance between performance and cost.

2) Strong Partner Coordination:

Successful cloud migrations require clear communication and coordination between partners.

Choose to work with partners who can demonstrate a willingness to collaborate, and designate a project manage to oversee and coordinate their efforts.

3) Dedicated Post-Migration Support:

A settling period after migration is critical.

A dedicated team for after-care support ensures that any issues are quickly addressed and that the transition to cloud operations is smooth.