



How Blue Cube Travel's cloud migration has transported the business to new places

About Blue Cube Travel

UK Corporate Travel Management company, Blue Cube Travel, was founded in 2003 and has up to 50 employees. Over the years the company has successfully delivered an unrivalled corporate travel experience to a varied client portfolio. The company prides itself on combining its know-how and expertise with the latest travel technologies including its own custom-designed analytics tool, Beyond Booking Analytics, to ensure its clients' travel programmes are best-in-class.

Upgrading infrastructure and migrating to the cloud

In 2018 Blue Cube Travel made the strategic decision that it needed to future-proof its IT infrastructure and migrate from a traditional on-premises server-based setup to the cloud. This migration had a wide scope as it involved not only moving from office-based servers, but the organisation also needed to replace servers, networking, phones, and enhance its security.

From the outset, Blue Cube Travel decided to outsource and select an IT specialist consultancy with cloud pedigree as it didn't have the in-house resources to manage a migration of this scale and importance. After a rigorous selection process, it chose IT consultancy, Northdoor plc, to help with the migration to Microsoft Azure as Blue Cube Travel recognised that the team at Northdoor really understood the needs of an SME.

Expert professional services

This was a strategic decision for the business and not just a simple 'lift and shift' of its on-premises systems to Microsoft Azure cloud. The organisation needed to address several requirements such as

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data privacy, security, resiliency, and ensure business continuity as well as the governance required to comply with regulations such as GDPR.

With Northdoor's expertise and professional services support each of these elements were manageable deliverables and by the end of 2018 the migration was complete. Servers, phones, networking, data and a new collaboration solution were all in the cloud.

However, further fundamental enhancements were still required. Blue Cube Travel recognised that its cyberattack surface had increased, due to increases in cyber-crime sophistication, and therefore needed to focus on strengthening IT security in 2019 and implemented a 24/7 security operations team using an outsourced provider.

Implementing a robust and secure set up

By the end of 2019 Blue Cube Travel had a robust and secure setup. Kevin Trill, Director of Technology and Transformation comments: "Back in 2018/2019 we experienced loss of data lines and power cuts, but the solution still operated without being dependant on a single Blue Cube Travel location. Additionally, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit we had to move to remote working and, thanks to Northdoor, we already had the infrastructure in place to enable employees to work from home, aside from provisioning a few extra laptops."

Blue Cube Travel recognises how important it is to have robust networking and security infrastructure in place and, as it has matured its requirements, so it has transitioned onto different providers to support its needs. Being hosted in Microsoft Azure made the business acutely aware of the myriad of solutions and options which are possible. Kevin Trill from Blue Cube Travel continues: “If you don’t have a specialist partner, like Northdoor, who understands your business, the cloud, and all the possible options, it can quickly represent a risk to your organisation, especially if you haven’t implemented the right security solutions.”

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Gaining a competitive advantage

Having moved to the cloud, Blue Cube Travel found itself in a better position to compete with other travel companies with far greater resources, because it now had the breadth, depth, flexibility and scale within its IT operations. Equally important, it could demonstrate that these solutions had been implemented properly and were professionally maintained and monitored, it hadn’t simply moved a few servers and data to the cloud. Data security is paramount to the business and Blue Cube Travel is confident that its data is now more secure as it has implemented tools within its cloud solution to further strengthen this.

Kevin Trill from Blue Cube Travel continues: “Any SME business, like Blue Cube Travel, that is considering a move to the cloud, needs to evaluate using professional services. Unfortunately, you don’t know what you don’t know and having a trusted partner, like Northdoor, to advise has been essential for our continued use of the cloud. Without this expert guidance, it was highly likely that any solution we implemented risked failing to deliver on any of the reasons why we migrated to the cloud in the first place. Furthermore, operating in the cloud is not always as cost-effective as you think. A stand-alone comparison of each on-premises solution versus cloud-based is too simplistic. There is no way we could have implemented all the solutions which are now vital to our business operation without using the cloud.”

Involving key stakeholders on the journey

Whilst many aspects of moving to the cloud from an employee or user perspective appear straightforward, there are key considerations around strategic requirements, scale and costs that need to be factored in. Therefore, it was essential that Blue Cube Travel involved key stakeholders from the senior management team as well as the Director of Technology to assess and understand the impact of any changes to the day-to-day operation.

Kevin Trill from Blue Cube Travel concludes: “I would advise any business that is looking to move to the cloud to engage specialist professional help. Northdoor helped us to not only successfully manage the migration but also to reduce our business risk and ensure we implemented best practice security policies. Of equal importance is consulting with companies who have undertaken a similar journey to the one you are considering, ideally in the same sector and definitely businesses of the same size.”

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