

CASE STUDY

***igroup***

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## How igroup eat their own dog food, by using the cloud extensively internally

Over the past fifteen years, igroup has gained a reputation as one of the leading managed Cloud providers for organisations who are looking to maximise the value of the cloud. Working with both Azure and Amazon Web Services, igroup support companies of all sizes and in a range of different markets.

As early adopters of cloud technology themselves, many of their business operations and applications are delivered through the cloud.

### The Challenge

**igroup** began moving their business operations to Microsoft Azure in 2010 because they recognised that the cloud was going to give their business greater operational flexibility; they would be able to adapt to the needs of their customers more quickly and it would be cheaper and more flexible than traditional on-premise solutions.

Steve Rastall, managing director of **igroup**, takes up the story; *"This allowed us to scale our business fast. We quickly saw the benefits including reduced operational costs and greater flexibility across the business but after a couple of years we started to see our cloud costs increase rapidly as more and more resources were needed and we saw the same pattern in both our AWS and Azure subscriptions."*

He continued; *"In addition, we were finding that adding more resources was not delivering the performance improvements we required so our team were constantly having to manage resources to get the best results."*

**igroup's** experience of the cloud was not uncommon and they identified two main challenges that they were now facing:

- **Cost increases** - As the number of resources they used increased so did the costs but more often than not they were not able to forecast these costs before they received the invoice. They also suffered from unexpected significant price rises from the cloud platform providers.
- **Performance** - Initially the cloud had delivered significant performance improvements but as their infrastructure grew the cost of resources seemed a lot more than it should be.

*"Having seen the benefits of the cloud and having recognised the challenges we knew that we needed to make cloud computing work better for our businesses,"* said Steve Rastall.

# The Approach

The first issue that needed addressing was cost. The team knew that the number and type of resources in their infrastructure directly affected cost so by 2014 they had developed a spreadsheet based solution which helped them keep track of resources and manage costs. At this point they had around 200+ Virtual machines being managed.

**igroup** saw cost reductions almost immediately because they could identify what resources were no longer needed and shut them down but as the infrastructure became more complex the spreadsheet became harder to maintain.

*“Using a spreadsheet was fine when there were just a few resources to manage but we knew we needed to automate many of the processes to gain higher cost savings and reduce our manpower requirements,”* explained Steve Rastall.

By 2018, **igroup** had developed a fully automated cost management and control system that had replaced the spreadsheets. It constantly monitored their cloud requirements and automated scripts would remove or repurpose unused resources to save costs. This enabled them to forecast costs more effectively and support the growth of the business.

Having seen the financial benefits of automating resource management, the **igroup** development team turned their attention to building solutions which would optimise the performance of their cloud at all times.

The team began working on performance improvements and over the next eighteen months began to implement a number of tools and applications on their cloud infrastructure. This included automatic resource allocation, scheduling, performance monitoring and error reporting.

By combining their cost and performance management applications together, **igroup** could achieve even greater savings and improved performance so began working on a new integrated solution.



## The Results |

In late 2020, **igroup** began trials of their integrated cloud management and support solution across their infrastructure. It had developed from a simple spreadsheet in 2014 to become an always-on cloud support and management solution which reduced cloud costs and ensured optimum infrastructure performance.

Now called **CloudOps Active Management Solution (CAMS)**, it brings together all the performance and cost monitoring tools, support processes and general administration functions that have been developed by **igroup** over the past 10 years in a single portal.

## The Future |

Over the past ten years, **igroup** have invested significant amounts of time and money to develop CAMS and it is continually being upgraded. As new features and functions are added these are deployed to the infrastructure to maintain the highest possible level of performance management and cost control.

**igroup** are now deploying CAMS on customer infrastructures who are already seeing significant benefits including performance improvements, cost reduction, greater infrastructure and resource visibility and the ability to use CAMS to help plan the delivery of new applications in the cloud.

*At a glance...*

## *The* **Challenge**

- Cloud resource costs were increasing
- Infrastructure performance was not meeting expectations

## *The* **Solution**

- To develop **CloudOps Active Management Solution (CAMS)** to deliver cost management and performance improvements across the **igroup** infrastructure

## *The* **Results**

- Significant cost and performance improvements
- A solution which can be used by customers to improve their own infrastructure performance and manage costs