Case Study – UK retail operator

Customer Details

Head Office: Chelsea, London

Total No. Employees: 200

Estate: On-premise Windows Servers
                               Bespoke Line of Business application
                               Multi-sites across UK and Europe

The Challenge

The customer had an ageing on-premise infrastructure platform which has come to the end of its functional life. The customer wanted to move away from on-premise to a flexible architecture and make use of Platform-as-a-Service database options to deliver faster performance and flexibility for their bespoke line of business application.

For the customer, the key challenges have been single points of failure and scalability.

Reliance of the entire business upon the infrastructure located within the customers head office caused lost business for the client's stores when the head office system was unavailable due to the Internet or building outages at the head office.

Scalability has been a challenge, especially given the nature of the business with peaks and troughs of trading upon on-premise infrastructure. During peak-times trading times, the customer sees a huge increase in sales transactions but cannot increase or scale up the on-premise systems to match the demand.

The Solution

The customer was confident that the issues it was facing could be resolved with a public cloud Infrastructure-as-a-Service architecture. It believed the key benefits in pursuing a serverless architecture were:

- Flexible Scaling –The application can be scaled automatically

- Automated High Availability – IaaS and PaaS provide built-in availability and fault tolerance without the need to architect for these capabilities since the services provided them by default.

- Pay For Value – Paying for consistent throughput or execution duration rather than by server unit is a compelling use case for long term application usage and development.

From an architectural standpoint, this was the customer's first venture into Cloud technologies, and as 90% of the internal platform followed the same structure, it was almost a technology PoC to understand if in the long term this could be used across all the platforms.

Opting for Lanmark's recommended Microsoft Azure public cloud, Lanmark's architects drew up a high-level design to build a Proof of Concept to demonstrate this could work for their current line of business application. Lanmark completed a PoC for the platform, within a few weeks. Following this, the customer's internal teams spent four weeks understanding the PoC and delivering their interpretation which was scheduled to go live August 2019.

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The Partnership

The Lanmark team was quickly able to understand how the current system worked and what the new components needed to do. Lanmark completed the Proof of Concept on time and within budget. What's more, Lanmark was able to spend time with the client's development partner to upskill and handover the project to ensure they were in the best position to take ownership of the solution and move it into production.

The Outcome

The Lanmark team validated the Cloud architecture concept and proved it could work in practice by building a fully functioning prototype using Azure IaaS and PaaS that the client has now adapted and Lanmark has migrated into production. Once implemented, the solution has allowed the client to move away from its existing on-premise server-based systems and dramatically reduced single points of failure for the entire estate of retail outlets with the added advantages of scalability, easy to maintain, reduced latency, cost, and complexity. Lanmark was also able to advise on how to calculate the running costs with the variables that would influence expenditure.