BRENNAN DIGITAL
Leading business transformation

Iceland Food simplifies data access and reduces operational costs through modern data management

A Microsoft Azure case study

Iceland

ABOUT ICELAND FOODS

Iceland Foods is a British food retailer with over 900 supermarkets throughout the UK, a further 40 owned or franchised stores across Europe, and a global export business. Iceland is one of Britain's fastest-growing and most innovative retailers, recognised as one of the best companies to work for in the UK.

Business Challenge

Iceland Foods' proprietary data platform was coming to its end-of-life, and the business sought a new solution that would allow them to to modernise their data estate. Iceland needed a data solution that would allow them to extract meaningful insights more easily from their data, and ultimately enable them to benefit from the latest machine learning and AI technologies.

The Solution

Iceland Foods adopted Azure Synapse as their new modern data warehouse, introducing high availability and disaster recovery, while providing a user-friendly solution built on familiar Microsoft technology.

The Results

The new data platform has facilitated easy access to information for business leaders, simplified data ingestion from additional sources, and streamlined recruitment, onboarding, and training processes at Iceland Foods. The data migration has also led to significant cost reductions, allowing the business to transition from a capital expenditure model to an operational expenditure model.

THE SITUATION

Iceland Foods had a high dependency on data to allow key staff to assess customer and sales insights. Iceland's existing data estate, a proprietary platform created by Teradata, was coming to its end of life. The Iceland Foods team knew that replacing the Teradata platform would be a complex process. The data estate had been in place for 20 years, and since its initial implementation cloud technology had evolved massively, leading to the availability of new, more innovative options for a modern data estate.

THE CHALLENGE

One key improvement required by Iceland Foods in its new data platform, was increased agility to allow them to drive more value from their data. Concerns with replacing the old Teradata platform with a newer version of Teradata also centred on the niche skill set necessary to access the data. To that end, Iceland contacted Microsoft to discuss options for the new estate. With time of the essence due to the approaching end of life, Microsoft connected Iceland Foods with our team of data estate specialists.

THE SOLUTION

The solution identified for Iceland Foods was to create a new modern data warehouse using Azure Synapse. This would accelerate the company's journey to the cloud and introduce HADR (high availability and disaster recovery). The modern data estate is user friendly and was built using familiar Microsoft technology.

"Moving from such an established system to a brand new, revolutionary platform was definitely daunting because there are some unknowns" said Phil Oldfield, Iceland Foods' Database Administrator. "Essentially, we had to take a leap of faith. But we didn't have any concerns when it came to [our technology partner]. The knowledge and level of support provided made the decision a lot easier for us".

"The team (from MOQdigital, a Brennan company) was able to demonstrate their skills very quickly. They reviewed elements of the estate and were quick to suggest improvements, changes and provide an overview. Other organisations we met with were much more reactive and did not have the strategic outlook that the team has" continues Phil.

Reduced operational costs

Greater opportunities to generate value from data

Accelerated journey to the cloud

THE RESULT

Using familiar technology has enabled key business leaders to access information with greater ease and allowed them to easily ingest additional data sources to augment their existing data. In turn, this ease-of-use has made recruitment easier for Iceland Foods, as there are less technical skills required by staff to access and analyse the information. This also means that onboarding staff and providing training is a quicker and smoother process.

The data itself, the most important component, has proven to be as robust and reliable as it was before the migration. And following the migration, Iceland have been able to benefit from greater opportunities to use their data, due to the intelligent functionality of Azure Synapse. The new solution is also scalable and can adapt to meet the requirements of peak trading times including Christmas. With the former estate retired, the Azure data estate aligns with Iceland Foods' broader business plan of cloud migration.

The migration to Azure Synapse has also resulted in significantly reduced operational costs. The modern data warehouse has transformed Iceland Foods from an expensive capital expenditure model to a cost-effective operational expenditure model.

The next step for Iceland Foods is to explore the machine learning possibilities available to them. The team aspire to use AI to enable staff to conduct sophisticated data analysis.

Learn more about Iceland Foods

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