

Case Study

Commercial property giant succeeds by transitioning their data to the cloud.



How an Australian commercial real estate giant is benefiting from building one data warehouse to optimise their operations

Companies rely heavily on operational, demographic, and financial data to optimise the performance of their business. But when that data is housed in an outdated warehouse with limited access or scope for scalability, it presents a number of problems.

A dominant player in the Asia-Pacific property industry, which operates over 10,000 retail outlets and is worth close to \$40 billion, knows this all too well.

Until recent years, their data was managed in a legacy data warehouse inherited from the company's previous structure. The age and architecture of the legacy system was preventing the company's thousands of employees, particularly its 100+ business analysts and other data-focused staff, from accessing the information they needed, when they needed it.

Not only this, but it was hindering the company's ability to leverage its data for improved customer and employee experiences — a focus of the company's upcoming growth strategy.

The information that the property group was retaining and looking to use as part of this strategy was initially focused on financial data such as the details of tenant leases, but as the business expanded in recent years, it grew to include data for onsite smart screens, data about customers' Wi-Fi usage, and other operational information.

With the current data warehouse at capacity, the company decided to re-architect the aging platform. They settled on a third-party data warehousing platform but found it was unable to meet the company's security, management and other requirements through what would be a bespoke development.

In revisiting their options, the group investigated cloud-based platforms and found Google Cloud Platform (GCP) — with BigQuery analytics, Google Cloud Storage and other tools — to be the most efficient choice for its next-generation data warehousing and analytics platform.

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With a legacy data warehouse at breaking point, one of the world's largest property groups engaged Servian to help democratise its data by centralising it on the Google Cloud Platform.



A partner for change

The scalability and flexibility of GCP made it a natural choice for the new platform, but it was clear early on that completing the migration would require expertise in the GCP products. Enlisting Servian as the preferred Google partner, the two organisations set about overhauling the company's data-management environment.

The new environment was built around tools such as the Apache Airflow-based Google Composer for cloud workflow management, Kubernetes containers using the Google Kubernetes Engine, Cloud Pub/Sub for inter-platform messaging, and more. Data is readily extracted from the company's CRM to a data lake built on Google Cloud Storage. Other GCP components used include Google Cloud SQL, Google Sheets, Google, Cloud Functions, Google Monitoring, Google Data Studio for reporting and Stackdriver.

The flexibility of the platform enabled the company to spin up anything they needed regarding Kubernetes containers and deploy their integration code in GCP to push things into BigQuery using Pub/Sub.

"We connected their network to the Google Cloud Platform, which enabled the company free movement of information between GCP, their existing data centre, and their CRM," a Servian Senior Consultant said.

"The benefits from the new environment were seen immediately. Data transfers, which used to take hours to process, now moved immediately, continually and with a much higher degree of fault tolerance."



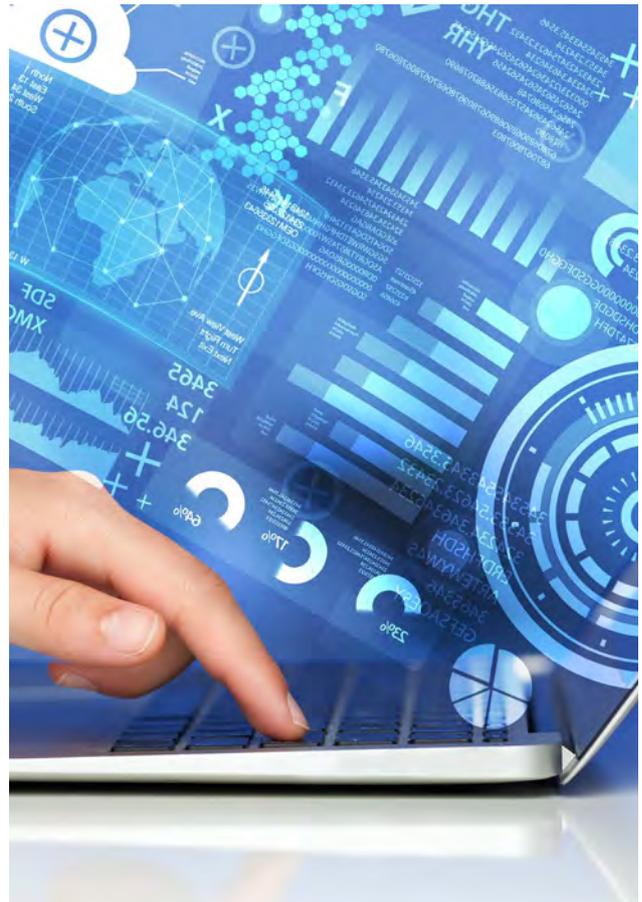
A new home in the cloud

The company's long-term strategy is to move all of its key applications into the cloud, broadening access to key corporate data and providing a data platform to support all business initiatives.

"The entire business benefits from the cloud-based platform as it liberates and democratizes the company's data. Legacy warehouses which keep data locked away and/or bound to one project prevent companies from gaining holistic insight and reaching their potential" says a Senior Consultant from Servian.

Now the data is centralised and readily available through the BigQuery-based data warehouse, the commercial group is seeing growing levels

of buy-in from data scientists, business analysts and other employees. New applications or capabilities are being developed in BigQuery by default and with the help of Servian, the team is ramping up the support of new projects that take advantage of the newly liberated data. "The company is seeing the success in the pipeline of their recent projects," said a Servian Senior Consultant. "The benefits from an operational sense have been significant. They no longer have to worry about scalability, nor do they have to do any redevelopment. Moving to the cloud opens up a whole suite of potential benefits which will be actualised in the near future as the company harnesses the opportunities enabled by GCP."



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