

Event Hospitality & Entertainment

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E V E N T

HOSPITALITY & ENTERTAINMENT

Key Points. The Challenge, the Stax Solution & the Results

The Challenge

- Event Hospitality & Entertainment Ltd (EVENT) had been operating on a hosted data center environment, which was complex as it encompassed all the businesses that sit under its brands.
- EVENT values business innovation and is always reviewing systems for better outcomes and cost efficiencies.
- This service provider was not evolving at the pace that EVENT wanted to innovate. An expiring legacy contract offered an opportunity to modernize by moving to the cloud.
- EVENT wanted to reduce its dependence on physical infrastructure and make use of the elasticity and flexibility of cloud-based infrastructure. On-premises data centers would not meet this challenge.
- They also have a requirement to meet demand for highly available and scalable infrastructure for their growing digital customer base, operating in highly seasonal markets.

The STAX Solution

- A platform for migrating on-premises workloads into AWS using a combination of Stax' sophisticated account provisioning and assurance technologies.
- Powerful, granular, actionable insights into cost and compliance.
- Customer-centric approach, with a dedicated customer success team that provides value above and beyond what can be self-serviced.

The Results

- Cloud foundations established in a matter of days.
- As a result, the cloud migration was completed in seven months.
- EVENT has been able to make cost reductions of around 30% since go-live.
- Ongoing evergreen foundations mean EVENT's developers can focus on core activities, rather than maintenance.
- EVENT can make smarter business decisions about cloud consumption, based on near-real-time cost and compliance data.
- Enhanced customer experience with AWS cloud reliability and increased capacity.
- EVENT can move up the technology stack to focus on strategic business outcomes.

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About Event Hospitality & Entertainment

Founded in 1910 and headquartered in Sydney, EVENT is at the forefront of the experience economy and delivers over 40 million customer experiences annually.

Event Hospitality & Entertainment Limited (EVENT) is a leading entertainment, hospitality and leisure company. From movies and adventure to travel and dining, EVENT believes that in an increasingly busy world, an outstanding experience can make the day better and create lasting memories.

EVENT own the largest cinema circuits in Australia, New Zealand and Germany under the brands Event Cinemas, Birch Carroll and Coyle, Cinestar, Greater Union and Moonlight Cinema. EVENT also own and operate more than 60 hotels including Rydges Hotels and Resorts, QT Hotels and Resorts and Atura Hotels. In the leisure space, EVENT operate Australia's much-loved ski resort, Thredbo Alpine Resort and one of Australia's oldest theatres, the State Theatre. The Company also owns a substantial property portfolio.

The Challenge

EVENT had been operating on a hosted data center environment that lacked the flexibility and scalability of a public cloud provider.

This left them subject to unplanned incidents and provider maintenance, and limited their ability to use modern architectures, like auto-scaling front-end web services. This had profound implications for a company made up of three highly seasonal and product-driven business units.

As well as the obvious variation in hotel and resort activity by season, cinemas face large spikes in demand, with a big movie driving booking activity up to 20 times higher than the average. According to EVENT Director of IT, Peter Bourke, this lack of flexibility meant the company was reserving too much capacity and then paying for it even when it wasn't required.

“It’s not just inefficient, it’s that you can’t get costs to scale up and down in line with your business activity. It’s about throwing the right amount at it, in line with your business activity.”

The same held true for capacity, Bourke says.

“We want to have access to public cloud capacity and scale so we can scale up on very short notice if we want to. We just couldn’t do that on traditional technology.”

The STAX Solution

Stax provided a single platform for migrating on-premises workloads into AWS using a combination of the Stax platform's sophisticated account provisioning and assurance technologies.

Stax provided AWS foundations including hardened, secure accounts conforming to the Well-Architected Framework and guardrails ensuring any work in the cloud conforms with security and compliance requirements.

Once in the cloud, teams were empowered take advantage of any new features and services of AWS without the ongoing burden of maintenance effort, and the knowledge their ecosystem was secure and evergreen thanks to Stax.

Meanwhile, Stax provided access to high-quality data and reporting capabilities not available within native AWS tools. These enabled ongoing cost savings with cost dashboards and an overview of potential cost optimizations, risk and compliance features, as well as cloud quality reports.

Stax has a dedicated customer success team that provides value above and beyond what can be self-serviced. This includes cost and compliance workshops, training, and new feature education for EVENT, allowing for a real person conduit that connects them to Stax. Insights are bespoke and provide real

EVENT leveraged Stax as a migration partner, along with a professional services partner for EVENT-specific configuration.

The Results

An Accelerated Migration, Underpinned by Consistent, Best Practice AWS Foundations

EVENT completed their migration much faster thanks to Stax.

With the Stax platform, establishing cloud foundations took a matter of days, allowing the professional services partner to layer on the "last mile" of EVENT-specific configuration, significantly reducing the end-to-end built time.

This was a complex project given they were effectively completing four migrations – one for each of the three main business units, and then another for the corporate group which is common across the business units.

Bourke says a key priority was a consistent architectural approach across the business units.

"Stax was invaluable in making sure the foundations were built the same way. Everything, regardless of which business unit you're in runs at the same standard."

An AWS native cloud management platform like Stax was critical, Bourke says.

"Our maturity level is growing but we wouldn't do it ourselves. So getting a partner was important and making sure we had some level of tooling that ensured some consistent architecture was important as well, because we weren't going to be able to fill that gap ourselves."

Ongoing Savings due to Proactive Cost Management Processes

Stax also enabled strong cost management processes, **allowing EVENT to make cost optimizations of around 30%** since go live.

The company relies heavily on the Stax cost functionality to ensure costs are properly tracked and allocated to the business unit, Bourke says.

"If it wasn't for Stax I think that would be a small nightmare. By the time you see the bill at the end of the month, you can't change any of that. But if you can see it day-by-day you can react fairly quickly."

"That's much better than finding out six or seven weeks later."

Increased Focus on Core Business

Anupuri says one of the principles of the company's IT roadmap is to consume services at the highest possible level.

"We want to be moving up the stack. If there are already services and partners out there that can do the commodity stuff for us, we can focus on our core apps, core business and core channels."

Stax has the company on that medium to long-term journey, he says.

"It's about 'stop doing stuff we don't need to do: like managing servers'. We don't actually want to do that. We just want the confidence that, 'once you configure and deploy things, it just works as designed.'"

Enhanced Customer Experience

Head of strategy and architecture for IT, Abhishek Anupuri says Stax provides EVENT with confidence in their customer experience, with AWS' extreme reliability, and the ability to manage capacity.

"If there's a major movie, we have the confidence and the ability to scale up. From our end-customer point-of-view it shouldn't matter if they're booking a major blockbuster ticket or a small movie, they should not have any disruptions or poor experience."



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Level 19, 8 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne, VIC 3000

www.stax.io