

Enable modern business applications

Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Sage

Website: www.sage.com

Customer Size: 12,700 employees

Country or Region: England

Industry: Professional services—
Software engineering

Customer Profile

Based in England, Sage is a leading global supplier of enterprise resource planning solutions with more than 6 million customers worldwide.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Azure platform
 - Microsoft Azure
 - Microsoft Azure Cloud Services
 - Microsoft Azure SQL Database
- Microsoft Visual Studio
 - Microsoft Visual Studio 2010
- Services
 - Microsoft Office 365

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Leading ERP Provider Cuts Deployment Time, Gains More Flexibility by Migrating to the Microsoft Cloud

“Simplicity and cost control are two major advantages of running our mission-critical software on Microsoft Azure. Now it’s about cloud activation, not server installation.”

André Brunetiere, Alliance Manager and Chief Technology Officer, Sage France

Sage, a leading global supplier of enterprise resource planning (ERP) and business solutions, wanted a new, flexible delivery model that could be easily customized for individual customers and markets, while ensuring high levels of performance. To meet its goals, the company decided to migrate its mission-critical ERP offerings for small businesses to the Microsoft Azure platform. By implementing cloud-based services, the company has cut deployment time from months to minutes, reduced IT costs, improved scalability, and increased access to ERP tools and data for employees at all levels of the organization.

Business Needs

Headquartered in Newcastle upon Tyne, England, Sage is a leading provider of ERP solutions to small and midsize businesses. More than 6 million customers in 24 countries use Sage products, which also include accounting, customer relationship management (CRM), and payment services. With a worldwide customer base, Sage needed solutions that could be easily adapted to unique business requirements and local markets while providing a consistent user experience and performance.

Since it was founded in 1981, the company has grown rapidly and today works with more than 22,600 resellers. To improve its services and help bring new customers onboard easily and affordably, Sage decided to look at migrating its mission-critical software to the cloud. However, the company had several hurdles to overcome first, not the least of which was time-to-market. “What we were searching for was a technology stack that would let us deploy our existing solutions on the cloud without having to create a brand new product, which would obviously take much longer.”

The company's customers also wanted faster deployment. Purchasing and installing servers and software could take up to two months, a sizeable investment in time and money for smaller businesses. Sage wanted a more affordable, scalable, and easily managed option that would retain all of the benefits of its existing, on-premises solutions.

Solution

In May 2013, Sage began moving its software to the Microsoft Azure cloud platform, beginning with its ERP software. The company chose a platform-as-a-service (PaaS) offering to accelerate time-to-market with automated scalability and built-in integration features. By taking advantage of the Microsoft cloud, Sage could focus on enhancing its software instead of managing infrastructure. André Brunetiere, Alliance Manager and Chief Technology Officer of Sage France, explains, "With Microsoft Azure, we believed we could solve one of our biggest challenges, which is to be competitive with other players in the cloud space while still providing the customization that our customers need."

Sage credits the Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 development system with helping smooth its transition to the cloud. Julian Masmitja, Research and Development Director for Sage 300—Mid-Market and CRM Solutions, says, "There is such a tight integration between Microsoft Azure and Visual Studio that it really eased deployment, all the way from development through staging."

The cloud deployments include Sage 200 Online in the United Kingdom, Sage Murano in Spain, and Sage 100 in France. In May 2014, the company began offering cloud services to Sage North America. Sage also implemented a web-based portal that its distributors can use to manage customers and billing, and provision applications. Instead of installing new servers and software, businesses simply subscribe through the portal, and Sage

handles the rest, including integrating line-of-business applications and scheduling backups. To further minimize deployment risk, the company is offering a three-month free trial of its cloud software.

Running on Microsoft Azure with Microsoft Azure SQL Database, Sage ERP applications integrate with external data sources such as in-house software and online banking services. Sage is also starting to connect its software with Microsoft Office 365, so that its customers can take advantage of an integrated environment with cloud-based ERP, office, and business intelligence (BI) tools. For example, Sage customers can use Power Query for Excel in spreadsheets to easily pull together and analyze large data sets from the ERP system.

Benefits

By running its mission-critical ERP software in the Microsoft cloud, Sage and its customers worldwide gain faster, more affordable implementation, improved scalability, and better access to business data.

Cut Implementation and Time-to-Market from Months to Minutes

By running its software on Microsoft Azure, Sage and its customers can get new solutions up and running faster. "Before, it could take up to 60 days to purchase and install all of the server infrastructure and software," says Masmitja. "Now, the provisioning is done automatically through Microsoft Azure. We can configure all of the connections in minutes, so from the customer perspective the benefit is huge."

It's easier for Sage to add new features too, which, like its solutions, can be automatically provisioned through the cloud. Brunetiere says, "With Microsoft Azure, we're looking forward to adding value with new functionality such as mobile apps and connectivity to more services."

Reduced IT Costs

In addition to providing faster deployment, cloud services help businesses save money, which is particularly important for smaller businesses in struggling global economies. "Simplicity and cost control are two major advantages of running our mission-critical software on Microsoft Azure," says Brunetiere. "Now it's about cloud activation, not server installation. Instead of investing in infrastructure, you just pay for a subscription, which can improve any business's financial situation."

Gained Unlimited Scalability

Sage customers gain more than just faster, more affordable deployment—they also benefit from virtually unlimited scalability and consistent performance wherever they're located. Brunetiere says, "With Microsoft Azure, there's never an issue with how many users are online at the same time, because the platform automatically scales as needed to handle the workload."

Improved Access to ERP Tools and Data

Businesses worldwide can improve access to ERP tools and BI with an integrated solution that includes Sage software running in the cloud with Office 365. "The data collected by our software has value to more than just a handful of ERP users," says Brunetiere. "So by providing role-based access through a mobile app, employees can use ERP data to improve multiple business scenarios, such as taking an order or making a quote."