CASE STUDY
William Hill Drives Innovation and Accelerates Business Strategy with CloudHealth

William Hill was founded in 1934 and is now one of the biggest sports and gaming providers in the world, with more than 12,000 employees across eight countries. William Hill is continuously innovating to bring customers engaging ways to bet and game in betting shops, sports books, online, or on mobile devices. Their business is highly complex, executing 5.2 million online transactions and 1.3 million sports betting opportunities each day. Sarah Lucas, Head of Platforms and Infrastructure at William Hill, spoke at VMworld 2020 about their hybrid cloud strategy, their plans to support multicloud, and how VMware has supported their journey.

William Hill’s Journey to the Cloud

As manual processes became time consuming, William Hill needed to move away from its traditional infrastructure approach in order to continuously meet customer demand and support business goals. With 30 products changing monthly, their monolithic environment lacked agility and became a significant issue.

William Hill modernized their on-premises data centers by adopting hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI) and containers, which allow developers to build applications and put them into production quickly. They upgraded infrastructure to HCI and networking technology to VMware NSX-T. These changes allow William Hill to absorb new acquisitions and launch new products faster, while achieving ongoing cost and resource savings.
At this point, William Hill still had on premises data centers and commenced their hybrid cloud journey. William Hill’s hybrid cloud journey is focused on creating a single set of resources that are both integrated and interoperable, spanning across private and public clouds. William Hill chose a hybrid cloud strategy to align with their overarching goal: reach customers faster with new products by improving utilization rates of on-premises data centers and using public cloud to scale on-demand. Hybrid cloud extends William Hill's data centers to better support business critical applications. This allows for rapid migration to the cloud, the ability to leverage cloud for on-demand scale, and extending the core processes required to support applications and infrastructure. William Hill’s goal is to adopt a fully multicloud environment in the future.

The foundation is built on AWS for native applications and empowers developers with tools and services to accelerate the cloud journey.

William Hill attributes their business success to using the right tools—CloudHealth by VMware and VMware vRealize provide all the management capabilities to move at the speed of cloud.

Cost Optimization with VMware

William Hill added CloudHealth to their toolset because AWS native tools weren’t providing enough data flexibility and granularity. CloudHealth gives William Hill a single view of costs, which is becoming increasingly useful as they split up products and environments across clouds.

CloudHealth Customer Success Services has helped William Hill with their cloud migration strategy by working with the team to identify patterns and best practices. CloudHealth’s focus on cloud financial management, operations, security and compliance align with William Hill’s business pillars for creating a well-architected framework.

CloudHealth provides visibility into unit costs for their service so William Hill can predict and forecast costs and see where savings opportunities lie.

William Hill also uses CloudHealth to enact and track AWS Savings Plans to ensure costs are being properly optimized. “CloudHealth is helping us define the ideal state so we can monitor when drift occurs,” Sarah said. CloudHealth establishes governance policies that trigger automated responses, freeing up colleagues’ time.

Cloud Priorities

Collaboration and coordination are critical to William Hill’s success. Organizations need a Cloud Center of Excellence (CCoE) to facilitate collaboration and adoption of best practices across all teams. Effective collaboration and communication is crucial so the organization as a whole can optimize their use of all the different cloud services. William Hill’s “Cloud First Strategy” is set forth for all new applications, enabling scalability and faster time to market.
VMC on AWS allows William Hill to utilize their current infrastructure engineering team for the migration without the need to embark on a mass retraining program. Both William Hill’s data center and cloud environments are held within a single strategy, unified by a common model for how they’re accessed and governed.

William Hill’s relationship with VMware is constantly evolving as their cloud migration progresses. CloudHealth’s data driven strategy supports William Hill’s business goals and continues to drive innovation in new ways.

“The collaboration with our CloudHealth team has been excellent from the start.”

SARAH LUCAS
Head of Platforms & Infrastructure at William Hill

Check out William Hill’s VMworld session here.