



CASE STUDY

Investment Management Group

Transforming the Way You Manage Investments

Problem

This investment management group needed to get out of their datacenters as the first step in their digital transformation initiative. They wanted to do it as quickly and efficiently as possible, but this would be the first AWS production environment for the firm. They needed an experienced partner to help them develop their overall digital innovation outline, and guide them from migration to machine learning.

Goal

The initial goal is to migrate the massive amount of trade data the company has in datacenters, to the VMware Cloud (VMC) on AWS. Once data is accessible, the firm wants to leverage it for a variety of use cases, including compliancy, data-based decision making, improved portfolio customization, machine learning solutions, and market differentiation.

Solution

2nd Watch serves as an advisor and collaborator. We work with the investment firm's data team and IT Operations staff to make sure the migration was quick and painless for the business IT users. First, we helped build their environment in VMC on AWS, and started migration slowly.

Today, we're continuing to help the company develop their digital transformation by enabling on-prem data lake migration into AWS. Ultimately, this will serve as the foundation for their larger data lake where additional pipelines and data queries can be used for business growth and to democratize access to data across the organization.



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About the Business

This investment management firm is one of the oldest in the U.S. It provides investment products to high net individuals, institutions, and financial professionals through five primary investment affiliates. Despite being the smallest, one affiliate is embracing technology and driving the largest percentage of assets as a result. The firm looks forward to scaling their personalized, customer-centric approach to individual portfolio management, using the data enablement projects they're working on with 2nd Watch.

The Business Challenges

The company doesn't have the internal resources and experience necessary to design, develop, implement, and optimize their digital transformation initiative effectively. They knew they needed to modernize their data in VMC on AWS, but couldn't do it alone. In order to meet compliance and reporting requirements, drive competitive advantage, improve customer portfolios, and continue growing, their data team needed a more flexible and elastic data lake.

From there, the firm will encounter a new host of challenges to operationalize and democratize data for cross team collaboration, analytics, insights, automation, and machine learning. The data has to be cleaned, organized, and stored according to compliance and governance policies, organization-wide procedures, regular maintenance, and ongoing optimization.



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The 2nd Watch Solution

2nd Watch focused on laying a strong foundation for the investment group's first step toward their digital transformation. Because the overall project is so complex, we started by initiating a **POC** involving just a few applications. Working with 2nd Watch, the company migrated and re-platformed a large number of websites from the datacenter to AWS. This phase included discovery, DMZ build-out, migration of servers into a previously deployed Landing Zone solution, and refactoring instances as needed.

Based on the AWS infrastructure design requirements, 2nd Watch recommended that the company **refactor and rearchitect** their websites. To enable the company's goal of becoming more cloud native, and with the long-term data goals in focus, we suggested rather than migrating static Windows workloads, the company update the websites for Amazon Linux hosts. Using Terraform, 2nd Watch automated deployment of the new website infrastructure.

The next phase of their datacenter exit was **migrating** the company's on-prem VMware environment to AWS. This created a platform for the company to complete their datacenter evacuation internally. 2nd Watch reviewed the VMware configuration requirements, completed dependency mapping, and developed a migration plan. Necessary to enable migration, the plan accounted for business criticality and application dependencies. To accelerate migration, we worked with the company's operations team to develop a repeatable migration procedure utilizing automation where possible.

2nd Watch continues to work with the investment group to build out their cloud strategy and guide them toward digital innovation.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

STEP 1

Initiate POC

STEP 2

Refactor & Rearchitect

STEP 3

Migrate to AWS

The Business Benefits

Since partnering with 2nd Watch, the company successfully took the first step toward modernizing their infrastructure, and gaining business-changing data insights for the future. Even though their cloud journey just started, these foundational steps are critical to project success, data application, use case development, and goal achievement.

CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE FROM THE DATACENTER UP

A lot of large organizations are facing similar challenges to this investment firm. Legacy datacenters are standing between massive amounts of valuable data, and the fast paced, digital-first demands of customers. Now that this company has the federally compliant, AWS infrastructure necessary to move away from their datacenter, that innovation roadblock is breaking down.

Starting with a POC reduced the complexity of their overall transformation goals, so the company's data scientists, operations team, and business leaders could better plan for, and develop future use cases. With years of sensitive trade data requiring migration, website and other system updates, strict industry regulations, and a company that's never established an AWS production environment before—the investment firm's decision to seek outside guidance highlights their drive to improve customer experience, and protect customer data efficiently. Using this first engagement as a stepping stone, the company is building momentum and getting buy-in to drive future migration initiatives.

Overall, the firm's digital transformation initiative will affect nearly every aspect of the business for the better. While the first step is only the beginning, it's important to get that foundational capability established to then enhance, expand, and scale to differentiate in any market. We look forward to continuing to work with this investment firm as they progress on their cloud journey.

DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR DATA INNOVATION

Originally, the firm was focused on data migration for modernization, licensing purposes, scalability, and overall access to data. Now that their cloud infrastructure is a reality, they're narrowing the scope to focus on the first use cases for applying data lake functionality.

With data access enablement, the company plans to streamline trade data pulls required by the SEC and their parent company to meet compliance regulations. The Data Team is focused on having the ability to query company data for machine learning solutions. Portfolio advisors look forward to accessing historical trade data to better predict investment outcomes for customers, and more precisely develop their custom portfolios. Over time, marketing and sales will use customer insights to personalize campaigns and optimize the customer journey, while development and UX teams apply data to improve online experience. And business leaders will gain impactful information about the company's standing among competitors to identify successes and weak spots.