Business challenge

To grow its business, PCMS needed a faster, more flexible way to deliver its retail commerce solution.

Transformation

To make its engaged commerce platform more flexible and faster to deploy so it could continue to grow its business, PCMS moved the platform to IBM® Cloud™. As a result of this business decision, infrastructure and implementation costs have decreased, enabling the company to sell to a broader range of businesses.

Results

Opens new market channels
by reducing implementation and operating costs

Significantly shortens time
needed to onboard new customers

Frees time and resources
that the company can redirect toward business growth

PCMS Group Ltd.

A move to the cloud supports exponential growth

Founded in 1982, PCMS has grown from a family-run business to a leading provider of services and enterprise and store-level software solutions for the retail, finance and other industries. Headquartered in Coventry, UK, PCMS works with more than 140 retailers across more than 50 countries. The company is privately held and employs approximately 500 people.

"The IBM Cloud is a perfect way of building our system so that we can scale according to the needs of the customer by the second, minute or hour."

—Jon Stretton, Chief Commercial Officer, PCMS

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A change driven by growth

In the past, when PCMS onboarded a new customer, it could take at least seven weeks to order and set up the necessary infrastructure. The company's strategy of using physical hardware in data centers was not scalable enough to support its growing business. And the business often had to make custom changes to its product to accommodate specific customer needs. "We couldn't scale our business at the growth rate we needed," says Jon Stretton, PCMS Group Chief Commercial Officer. "We couldn't grow our business if we continued with the monolithic way of building software on physical hardware in physical data centers using our own staff for the integration."

PCMS needed to transform its product from an on-premises model to a cloud-based software as a service (SaaS) model. The company sought a cloud infrastructure for its VISION Commerce Suite.

A shift to the cloud

Building on a long-standing relationship with IBM, PCMS chose IBM Cloud to support its engaged commerce platform, the VISION Commerce Suite. The company has taken the architecture that it previously used in data centers and replicated it on IBM Cloud. The VISION Commerce Suite also uses the IBM DB2® database and IBM MQ messaging software as key components driving functionality and performance.

Moving to the cloud adds flexibility and scalability to the company's infrastructure. PCMS can provision a new infrastructure for a new customer on IBM Cloud bare metal servers in just 12 – 15 minutes. Plus, the business can easily add more processing power if a customer needs additional resources during peak trading periods, for example. "The IBM Cloud is a perfect way of building our system so that we can scale according to the needs of the customer by the second, minute or hour," says Stretton.

By using the IBM Cloud, PCMS can more easily expand the scope of its solution. "The cloud brings capabilities that were not there in the past, and we're actively looking at how our platform and IBM Cloud can enhance our proposition for the end customer." For example, PCMS expects to work with IBM to take advantage of the IBM Cloud Kubernetes Service to containerize its applications.

Greater agility, lower costs

Stretton says the move to IBM Cloud helps lower the cost of entry for customers wanting to purchase the VISION Commerce Suite, enabling smaller organizations to "punch above their weight" with top line software solutions that may have been out of reach previously. As a result, PCMS has expanded the market for its retail solution to smaller and medium size businesses. "The cloud makes implementation cost effective, simpler and faster," says Stretton, "providing smaller organizations with a robust, reliable and flexible solution used by tier-one retailers."

PCMS also expects that the move to the cloud will help it free up critical time and resources that it can redirect toward the product development and innovation that is critical to the company's continued growth. "We don't want to be the ones who implement all of our software for all of our customers," says Stretton. "The heavy lifting on the infrastructure side doesn't add any value to retailers, so we'd rather that was done by someone else." With its infrastructure on IBM Cloud, PCMS has reduced the time needed to provision the resources for new customers from weeks to a matter of minutes.

Solution components
- IBM® Cloud™
- IBM Cloud bare metal servers
- IBM DB2®
- IBM MQ

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