



Business challenge

HansaWorld's clients are keen to adopt cloud services, but the company struggled to find a commodity cloud platform that could support both small and large enterprises effectively across many countries worldwide.

Transformation

HansaWorld has migrated to the IBM Cloud, using virtual servers at multiple global data centers to boost performance for clients, while harnessing IBM Watson™ to develop new cloud-based service offerings.

Business benefits:

Enables

sophisticated multi-level cloud hosting to meet the needs of clients and resellers

Extends

global reach with cloud data centers in all major regions worldwide

Eliminates

the inconvenience of moving backups and other data sets between data centers

HansaWorld

Helping clients gain flexibility and unlock new capabilities with IBM Cloud and Watson technologies

HansaWorld is an international software development company that specializes in ERP and CRM solutions. For more than 30 years, the company has been delivering innovative products that help clients around the world automate their business processes. Today, the company offers a range of business management solutions designed for businesses of all sizes and industries, supporting more than 30 languages, and available on almost any platform from Android and iOS to Windows and macOS.

"With IBM Cloud, HansaWorld and its partners can provide market-leading ERP solutions for our clients without any of the costs and risks of managing on-premises infrastructure."

Jennifer O'Carroll,
Operations Manager
HansaWorld

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When one size doesn't fit all

HansaWorld is one of the world's most versatile ERP vendors, supporting more than 550,000 clients in every industry, ranging from startups to large global enterprises. Thousands of clients in more than 110 countries around the world rely on its software, which runs on almost every desktop and mobile platform and is available in more than 30 languages. The company also has a thriving network of partners that resell its solutions and add value through implementation, support and hosting services.

To support such a wide range of clients both directly and through its partners, HansaWorld must be exceptionally flexible. The needs of a small restaurant business are very different from the needs of a multinational manufacturing company, for example—but HansaWorld caters for both ends of the spectrum, and every business in between.

The need for flexibility became particularly apparent when the company decided to build a cloud platform for its offerings.

“The ability to build AI-powered services with IBM Watson helps us stay ahead of the competition.”

Jennifer O'Carroll,
Operations Manager, HansaWorld



Jennifer O'Carroll, Operations Manager at HansaWorld, explains: “We wanted to make it easy for our clients to move their ERP systems into the cloud, as well as empowering our partners to offer cloud hosting services—but most of the cloud providers we considered just didn't have the flexibility or the global reach to deliver everything we needed.”

HansaWorld wanted to distribute its cloud services across multiple global regions, using local data centers to reduce latency and increase performance for clients in nearby countries. Finally, it wanted to lay the foundations for new big data analytics services by harnessing a platform that would make it easy to move and process large volumes of information.

“When the idea of the cloud was new, people imagined it would offer a one-size-fits-all approach to infrastructure,” says Jennifer O'Carroll. “But in reality, different systems have different needs, and you can't do everything efficiently with a commodity cloud service.”

Unlocking new capabilities with IBM Cloud

Jennifer O'Carroll comments: "In our experience, the level of service IBM provides on an international level is unmatched by other providers. Our products need to be able to connect to a huge number of different APIs, and achieving that degree of integration really requires a hands-on approach. We wouldn't have been able to achieve so much, so quickly without IBM's support."

HansaWorld's new cloud environment is primarily built on [IBM Cloud Virtual Servers](#), which provide the flexibility the company needs to manage large numbers of servers easily, and scale up or down in minutes as the level of demand for different services changes.

The ability to configure each Cloud Virtual Server along a number of dimensions (for example, choosing transient, public or dedicated infrastructure, or selecting high-performance local disks versus cost-effective SAN storage) enables HansaWorld to set up environments that are precisely tuned to the requirements of each workload, and makes it possible to offer a versatile multi-tier cloud that is suitable for clients and partners of all sizes.



Jennifer O'Carroll adds: "IBM has data centers in more countries than most other cloud providers, which is important for our international client-base. The ability to host each client's systems in a nearby data center means we can reduce latency and increase performance and responsiveness for end-users."

As a further advantage, the IBM Cloud is built on a high-speed internal network that allows clients to move data between servers and devices freely and conveniently. This is likely to help HansaWorld in the future, especially as the company continues to develop big data analytics services that will require large-scale data transfers.

Finally, the move to IBM Cloud has made it easier for HansaWorld to develop innovative services based on [IBM Watson](#) technologies. For example, the company is launching a new virtual assistant service built on [IBM Voice Agent with Watson](#) that is designed to help employees and clients interact directly with HansaWorld's ERP solutions.

When a user is connected to the talkbot, [IBM Watson Speech to Text](#) converts the audio stream of their voice into text, which is then fed into [IBM Watson Assistant](#) to analyze the content of the inquiry, and respond with an appropriate answer or action. The result is then converted back into audio using IBM Watson Text to Speech, so the talkbot can reply to the user in natural language.

The solution also uses [IBM Watson Tone Analyzer](#) to detect the mood of the user—so if they have an inquiry that the talkbot can't answer, and they seem to be becoming frustrated, their call can be forwarded to a human agent for rapid resolution.

“There are so many potential opportunities for IBM and HansaWorld to collaborate—not only on technologies like the talkbot, but also commercially.”

Jennifer O'Carroll,
Operations Manager, HansaWorld

Building a strong relationship to deliver client value

“With IBM Cloud, HansaWorld and its partners can provide market-leading ERP solutions for clients without any of the costs and risks of managing on-premises infrastructure,” says Jennifer O'Carroll. “And the ability to build AI-powered services with IBM Watson helps us stay ahead of the competition.”

For example, the new talkbot service is designed to offer significant value to clients both large and small. For enterprises, it can provide a much more powerful and customer-friendly alternative to traditional hard-coded interactive voice response (IVR) systems. And for smaller companies, the talkbot can reduce the need for receptionists to spend time routing incoming calls to appropriate departments—and can even deal with simple inquiries in a fully automated way.

“At HansaWorld, we believe in using our own products, and our internal teams are keen to be the first to roll out the talkbot service,” says Jennifer O'Carroll. “We've been teaching it to handle invoicing queries, so it will be able to walk customers through the process of checking their license status, invoices and payments, without any human intervention.”

By automating these kinds of processes, HansaWorld expects both its own business and its clients to be able to save hundreds of hours on administrative tasks, and free up employees to focus on more valuable work.

Jennifer O'Carroll concludes: “There are so many potential opportunities for IBM and HansaWorld to collaborate—not only on technologies like the talkbot, but also commercially. For example, our [Standard CRM](#) and [Standard Accounts](#) products are already available in the IBM Marketplace, and we're working closely together to bring innovative cloud-based ERP solutions to clients around the globe.”

Solution components

- IBM® Cloud™ Virtual Servers
- IBM Voice Agent with Watson™
- IBM Watson® Assistant
- IBM Watson Speech to Text
- IBM Watson Text to Speech
- IBM Watson Tone Analyzer

Take the next step

To learn more about how IBM Cloud and IBM Watson technologies can help you transform your business, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit ibm.com/cloud and ibm.com/watson

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