



Case Study



Amalgamated achieves financial and operational success with Microsoft Azure

Do what matters

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Business situation

Amalgamated Financial Group (AFG), headquartered in New Jersey, was founded in 1958 as America's first business specific receivable management firm, specializing in the transportation industry. Today, it provides the nation's leading transportation and commercial companies with a multitude of financial solutions within the bill-to-bank receivable arena.

AFG is an organization built on leading edge technology, cleverly designed for adaptability and integration. Its mantra, to seek and deploy emerging technologies, has kept its client partners' costs low while empowering them with tools for total control and visibility to the transactions entrusted to AFG. Though it provides many different services, you will not find a single pre-packaged program at AFG. It has never found two clients that have the same philosophies, cultures or goals and it doesn't expect to find any in the future. Every client's business is handled individually and uniquely within the designed specifications to maximize effectiveness and value. Lastly, AFG is about people. In the end, it is people that perform and manage the services. Its people are well trained and extremely professional. But they are also nice people, who make the process of doing business a serious but enjoyable task.

AFG's IT department had been running COBOL, LINC and Reporter III applications (approximately 750K lines of code) on a Unisys CS7201 (approximately 500 RPMs) for years. It also had approximately 1,500 workflows and more than 200 end users. Applications including billing, customer care, dispute resolution and collections, and a cash application comprised AFG's revenue recovery process. As with any collection service, it also had a number of external interfaces that needed to be preserved. Although this environment had served AFG well over the years, as business increased, it needed a system that would allow it the ability to grow the company and save money.

Industry: Financial Services

Country: US-Northeast

Company Size: 28,000

Solutions: Microsoft Azure Platform Services

Enrique Rozo, AFG's IT Director, says the single most valuable thing it needed was an integrated, cost-effective migration process from the mainframe to client server architecture with a relational database. The IT department also needed a way to consolidate their development environment into a single programming language.

Solution

Avanade's migration technology, AMT LION, facilitates Unisys mainframe migrations to a Windows environment powered by a SQL database. AFG chose AMT LION to meet all of its needs, including:

- The ability to migrate LINC, COBOL, Reporter III and Work Flow into a single programming environment
- The ability to migrate AFG's DMS II hierarchical database into a relational SQL database
- A solution that would allow it to respond to development issues faster
- Saving money on mainframe and maintenance costs
- The ability to modernize its legacy applications

AFG provides end-to-end services in credit risk, billing, customer care, dispute resolution, receivable contact, collections and cash application. Its outsourcing and third-party divisions and technologies give its clients enormous flexibility in process options and service levels.

"Our ability to obtain ad hoc and repetitive reports has been greatly enhanced in the new environment. The system has been available in the early morning hours much more often after heavy overnight batch processing than in the mainframe environment. In this regard, the platform is as robust as advertised."

– Ken Fulmore

Executive Vice President, AFG

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Once migrated, AFG continued to develop and enhance its applications. That is, until 2012, when it was struck by a natural disaster, Hurricane Sandy. This left millions without power and hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses damaged in the northeast. The damage from the hurricane covered such a large area that it led AFG to the realization that relying on local redundancy for disaster recovery was not enough for business continuity. For an entire week, neither AFG nor its customers could process business on its systems.

Following Sandy, AFG decided to move its applications to the cloud and take advantage of geo-redundant storage. And while there were some lessons learned in the beginning of the move to the cloud, the resulting deployment and transition was seamless. Once they were deployed, AFG realized that, along with cost savings and increased availability, there were additional benefits to running its applications on [Microsoft Azure](#) with Avanade.

Results

With AMT LION, AFG has improved in the following technical areas:

- Batch production processing time improved by 50%, from seven hours to 3.5 hours
- Delivery time for reports reduced drastically, from 2-3 days to same-day service
- Overall average response time has improved from 4-6 seconds on the mainframe to 2-3 seconds
- Migration development backlog estimated around 8-10 months was completed in less than four months
- Application changes and database reorganizations have dramatically improved, affecting system uptime positively

With Azure, there is now no worry about availability. The geo-redundancy allows AFG to serve their customers 24/7/365, in a more secure environment. Never again will they be exposed, even with a natural disaster.

“The walk from the mainframe to the server environment was a very good migration, and then of course moving from the server to the cloud was 100% better. At least now we are in more of a secure environment and we have availability 24/7. Working with Avanade was very good, I didn’t have any problems. The migration went along very cleanly and everything is good.”

– Bob Primiano
Networking Manager, AFG

NOTE: This story describes work that was completed by Asysco, which was acquired by Avanade in November 2022.

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About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital, cloud and advisory services, industry solutions and design-led experiences across the Microsoft ecosystem. Every day, our 60,000 professionals in 26 countries make a genuine human impact for our clients, their employees and their customers. Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at www.avanade.com.

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