

CASE STUDY

HENSON GROUP // OVERLAND FOOTWEAR

OVERLAND
FOOTWEAR GROUP



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BACKGROUND



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“We can spin servers up or down whenever we want. That flexibility is insane, and we absolutely love it.”

“Henson Group has migrated clients to Azure hundreds of times, they’re a global company, and they’re a Gold Certified Microsoft Partner. Their vast experience gave us the confidence to move forward.”

—Dasith Goonatilaka, IT Manager

Overland Footwear is a family-owned retailer that sells its Merchant 1948 and Mi Piaci brands through four brand-specific websites and 50 store locations across New Zealand and Australia.

With 500 employees, the Auckland, New Zealand-based company also operates regional offices in Australia.



CHALLENGE

Overland Footwear (Overland) needed to modernize its IT infrastructure to support aggressive growth and was eager to migrate its servers to a cost-effective, flexible environment.

The retailer was paying an exorbitant cost per terabyte for data and application hosting through a third-party data center, so cost was a big driver in the decision to move to a cloud-based platform.



Initially, IT Manager Dasith Goonatilaka asked the data center provider if they could migrate a single virtual machine (VM) to assess consumption and the associated costs.

However, the provider wanted a steep fee just for the initial service, and it just wasn't economically practical to continue in this direction.

SOLUTION/RESULTS

After Goonatilaka attended a Microsoft-sponsored webinar, Microsoft reached out to discuss his needs.

The representative explained they could set up VMs to test consumption at no cost and recommended working with Henson Group, an award-winning Microsoft Azure Expert MSP partner.

"I've worked with Microsoft Azure in the past and I knew it would make sense to move to this platform given our business size and the number of machines we have," he said.

"Henson Group has migrated clients to Azure hundreds of times, they're a global company, and they're a Gold Certified Microsoft Partner. Their vast experience gave us the confidence to move forward."

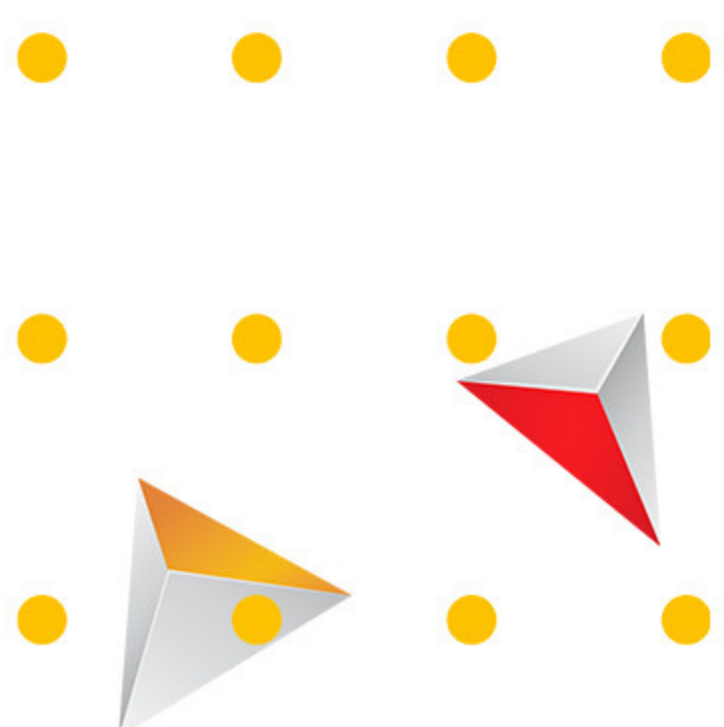
"With Azure you have different options like budget caps, cost caps, and alerts to monitor your spending," Goonatilaka said.

"I absolutely love all the insights you get from Azure." Now, Overland can plan and manage spending confidently and make informed decisions about directing savings toward other projects.

"It's a massive value add to the business in terms of reducing costs and being able to allocate that cost into modernizing our infrastructure," he said.

DATA AND APPLICATION COSTS SET TO DROP BY 50%

Besides avoiding a sizable migration fee, Overland is realizing significant ongoing savings—forecasting a 50% reduction in monthly data and application hosting costs with Azure. The retailer now has the tools to better manage data storage spending.





A SEAMLESS PATH TO A FLEXIBLE PLATFORM

With responsibility for Overland's retail store and back-office IT infrastructure, Goonatilaka worked closely with Henson Group to ensure a smooth, seamless migration.

Henson Group set up agents on the retailer's VMs to evaluate consumption and estimate recurring costs.

After copying files, syncing data, and conducting extensive testing, the provider migrated 15-16 servers and three terabytes of data to Azure in April 2023, strategically avoiding the year-end shopping season and January promotional period.

"Henson took care of everything and just made our life so much easier," Goonatilaka said.

The provider also leveraged Azure Virtual WAN to connect branch offices and remote locations to a central hub through secure VPN or ExpressRoute connections.

"Our Azure infrastructure is part of our wide area network, which means there are no server access issues. We can see our network in New Zealand or Australia, and everything is seamless," he said.


With everything backed up to locally redundant storage, then synced to the cloud, there are no more worries about redundancy.

Overland is finding it just as easy and trouble-free to manage the cloud-based platform as it was to migrate. "Because we have a smaller server stack, it's fairly easy to keep a tight ship running," Goonatilaka noted.

He appreciates the flexibility of managing certain tasks in-house to reduce third-party reliance and is confident he'll get the service a 24/7 operation demands, even on busy holidays.

An incident that occurred just before the migration underscored the importance of a reliable infrastructure and service partner: Overland ran out of space on a production server at the height of the Christmas shopping season, but the data center support staff was on holiday for a week, leaving the retailer scrambling.

"On Azure, we don't have to worry about that," he said. "Microsoft works 24/7, so we can get support whenever we need to. And we can spin servers up or down whenever we want. That flexibility is insane, and we absolutely love it."



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR TRANSFORMATION

Goonatilaka sees the Azure migration as the first step in upgrading Overland's infrastructure to support growth.

"The whole business is talking about going through a digital transformation journey, and we want to modernize a lot of things," he said.

"This migration will enable us to accomplish a lot more and fine tune our environment.

Initially it was a cost exercise, but there are other benefits of going to Azure.

"Overland plans to upgrade its reporting capabilities by implementing Microsoft Power BI and foresees migrating its SQL Server fleet to Azure PaaS.

Azure provides the perfect foundation for Overland's continued expansion.

"It will enable our business to innovate a lot more and give us the flexibility to scale as we look to expand into Australia," said Goonatilaka.

. "That's going to be a huge benefit—to have things on the back end ready to go." Along the journey, he plans to call on Henson Group again.

"I love working with them. Their service has been top notch," Goonatilaka said.

"I've started talking to them about other projects because I really liked their service and support."

Challenges

- Costly data and application storage
- Growth inhibited by a legacy infrastructure
- Lack of insights to manage data costs

Value Created

- 50% drop in data and application hosting costs
- Improved budgeting through data-driven insights
- Easy-to-manage, flexible infrastructure
- More reliable service
- Modern foundation to support expansion

Solutions

- Azure Migration



About

Henson Group is a certified Microsoft Azure Expert MSP partner focused on the deployment of Microsoft technologies and managed services for companies worldwide.

The majority of our architects, engineers, and developers are former Microsoft employees, which means we have relationships with Microsoft product groups and executives that give us access to roadmaps and knowledge not generally available to our competitors.

Today, we have more than 650 employees and partners servicing hundreds of clients in dozens of industries. From cloud and on-premises support to licensing

—Henson Group consistently delivers world-class results for its clients worldwide.




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