



Modern App Innovation

The Need For Speed: Using the Power of Cloud for App Innovation



A crucial component of today's enterprise lies in the business logic and information assets contained within legacy application estates. The ever changing digital landscape is requiring business to evolve which is putting pressure on the applications to respond. Sure, your apps are keeping the lights on and the business running, but are they fit for the mobile-first, data centric world of business? Some may think that the solution to the costly and resource intensive legacy app problem is to simply build new – but is that always the right approach? What if there was a way to unlock the value in these applications and give them a new lease of life to operate in this new digital landscape?

The Problem with Legacy

Legacy applications, like almost all systems branded legacy, have a cost issue – namely that they become increasingly expensive to support as they age. As the applications get older, support charges and maintenance costs keep on climbing. And IT spend is not just limited to the support and maintenance costs of these ageing applications, but also with the infrastructure required which is hitting the pocket of businesses big and small. This is because older applications generally need older or bespoke environments on which to run, needing specific hardware or legacy operating systems or databases.

So, as applications age and costs spiral, so does the infrastructure need to support them. However, the infrastructure problem is twofold. The specific, proprietary hardware and software needed to run legacy apps are difficult to mobilise and no longer capable of meeting the demands of a modern growing business. In the mobile-first world, legacy apps would require a re-build to create a new mobile front-end, while businesses wanting to scale or adapt for an expected surge in data, for example, would need months for planning and implementation in order to adapt and roll out new capabilities.

In today's digital age, businesses also need applications which offer scalability, flexibility, mobility and which deliver a return on ROI. Legacy apps often struggle to deliver on any of those factors, and cope with the real-time processing, high-bandwidth and data proliferation brought about and



demand by the digital world. Yet faced with these challenges, businesses are still reluctant to turn away from legacy apps, with 70% of typical business transactions still running on legacy applications, according to Accenture. But why, with such obvious benefits to modernisation, do businesses still rely on legacy apps?

Many businesses believe that the perceived cost of moving apps into the cloud can sometimes outweigh the expected ROI. Many businesses find it hard to wean themselves off of complex systems, only taking action when legacy apps stop enabling the business. Although legacy apps may be keeping the lights on, the need to deliver at pace and innovate should lead businesses to consider the cloud as a way to kick-start app innovation.

What is a Modern App?

Sometimes when words like 'legacy', 'modern' and 'mobile-first' are used frequently, the actual meaning and the associated benefits to business get lost. When we talk about modern apps, we are talking about the rapid optimisation, maintenance and management of applications across a cloud environment. The modern app development process lets businesses tap into innovative practices like agile and DevOps, while also benefitting from progressive technologies like containers.

Adam Szabo, Modern App Practice Lead at New Signature says "There are many reasons why a business should consider moving its apps into the cloud. Firstly, legacy apps usually have high maintenance cost. Secondly, when apps were designed 5 or even 10 years ago they were typically created with a specific purpose and requirement in mind, but huge changes can happen over that time.

"As additional functions are added on top, complexity and maintenance cost increases. Ultimately the business reaches a point where it needs more flexibility to meet current and future business requirements. That's often the point where app modernisation comes onto the agenda."

Making the move to cloud

There are three broad development options for business looking to modernise and refresh their application estate – on-going app modernisation, cloud re-architecture or refining and enhancing the app on-premise.

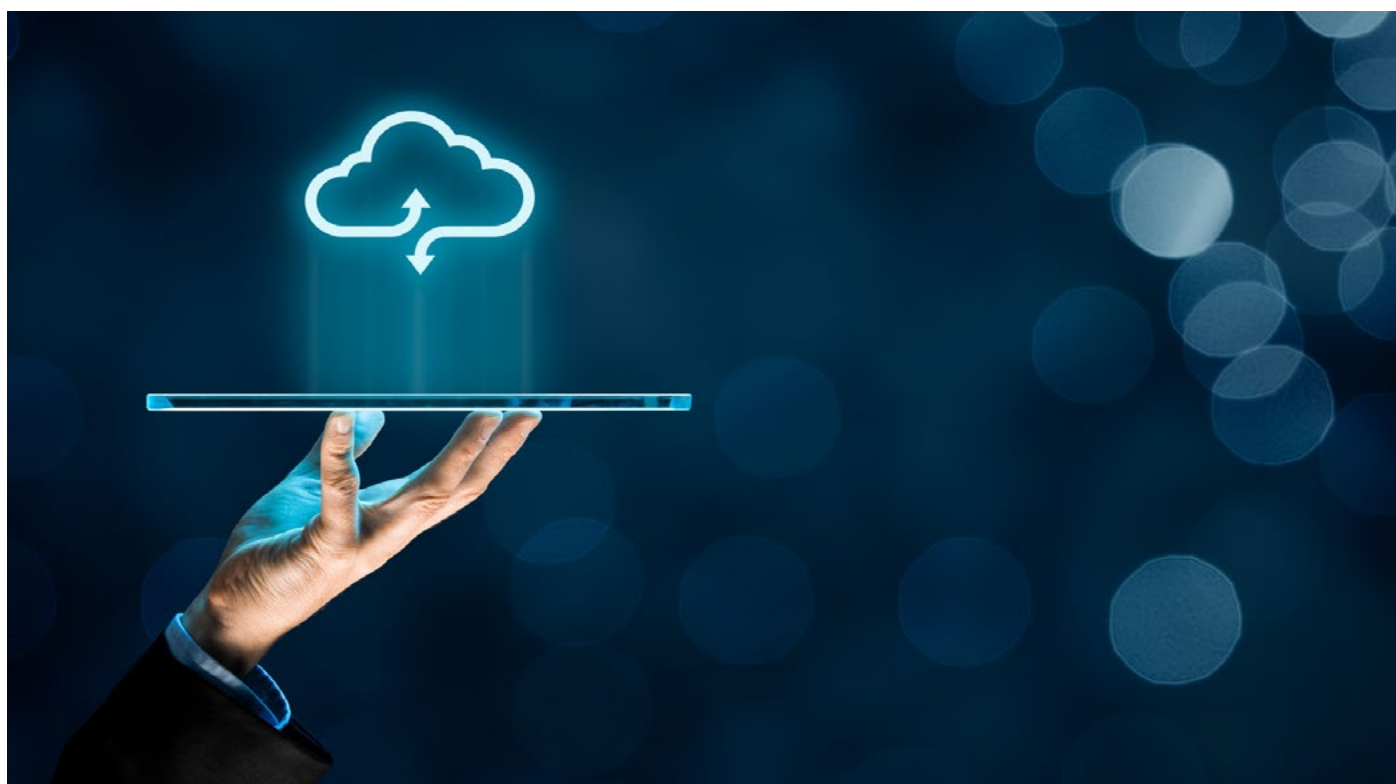
With app modernisation, businesses consolidate, refresh or restructure the legacy application in order to align it with current business needs, often moving components of the app into the cloud where greater efficiency can be achieved. Ongoing modernisation allows you to replace individual components one at a

time with a modernised version but leaving the rest of the app intact. This works well for businesses who don't want to rewrite the whole app but want some improvements and a path for continuous improvement.

Cloud rearchitecture, however, looks to eventually decommission legacy applications by creating entirely new versions in the cloud. In some instances, a complete app rearchitecture in the cloud presents the best ROI in the long-term by helping to optimise cost and performance, as well as providing a future-proofed app that can keep adapting to meet business requirements in the future.

To refine and enhance the app on-premise is more suitable for simple back-fixes and where small additional features need to be introduced. These can be achieved without moving the app from your on-premise infrastructure, however, that doesn't take away the maintenance requirement and cost, simply providing some short-term gain.

New Signature caters for all three options, helping to assist businesses in converting legacy apps, building entirely new cloud-native applications to sit within Azure or providing simple fixes and adding new features, depending on what the short and long term goals are.



“For many businesses, the decision to modernise apps is increasingly becoming a matter of ‘when’ rather than ‘if’. We support businesses to find the right route for them, balancing the initial upfront investment required with the long-term end-goal and savings,” comments Adam Szabo from New Signature.

“A successful app modernisation project requires involvement and ownership from different stakeholders within the business. We encourage each of them to consider what they want to achieve in terms of performance gains, cost outlay versus savings, and their future business roadmap. It’s vital that they envision where the business needs to be versus where they are right now, and we help them to bridge this gap, so they can transform their use of applications to drive closer to that desired end-state.”

Modernising apps causes less disruption to the business and existing systems than if brand new applications were developed. As well as less risk, the investment required to modernise existing apps eliminates the ROI worries of those fearing the move to cloud.

New Signature’s cloud-based solutions hosted in Azure allow businesses to take advantage of capabilities like elastic scaling, which enable applications to easily handle spikes in usage without complex infrastructure changes, reducing costs significantly. In addition, disaster recovery is made simpler through the cloud, as well as the ability to increase collaboration since cloud-based apps are available from any location and device. Data security is also ensured in the cloud, with businesses able to control access to their data.

Future-Proofing the Digital Business

App Modernisation also enables the business to future-proof their operations, tapping into the resources and technological prowess of the Microsoft platform and being able to leverage the latest technologies.

One business to realise the benefits of app modernisation was Indignia, a software technology

company providing SupplyStream, a business critical SaaS application. Before working with New Signature, the application was running on hardware on-premises, requiring management of both the server hardware and its software and putting constraints on both the scalability and availability of the application. Indignia slashed maintenance costs by migrating their on-premises application to the fully managed Microsoft Azure platform. New Signature conducted the necessary upgrades and transformations to make the application cloud-ready, then moved it to Azure’s managed platform.

“New Signature migrated SupplyStream, Indignia’s on-premises business critical SaaS application, to Microsoft Azure. They enabled us to fully utilise the benefits of the scalability and availability of the cloud platform. Not only has the move cut maintenance efforts, but it has given us reassurances that in the event of a disaster we can maintain business as usual,” said Alon Kovner, Technical Director at Indignia.

DevOps in the Modern App Roadmap

DevOps has been one of the biggest trends to hit IT in recent times, with the concept advocating the unification of software development and operations in order to deliver applications at high velocity. The popular portmanteau was born with a clear rationale behind it – markets are fast moving, so software development needs to be as quick for business to stay profitable and competitive. But where does DevOps come into the Modern App equation?

DevOps is vital when a business brings out new applications – be it modern iterations of legacy applications or new build, cloud-native apps. In modern app development, DevOps when applied properly can streamline processes and allow for a cohesive workflow. Ultimately, DevOps looks to aid a more lean and agile operation, and could help you deliver shorter development cycles, increased deployment frequency and more dependable releases – all while aligned with business objectives.

Key aspects of the DevOps movement lie in

collaboration and automation, both strongly advocated by New Signature for adding instant value pre- and post- app deployment. Microsoft tools like VSTS and Azure Automation provide valuable building blocks to accelerate that DevOps process.

Visual Studio Team Services (VSTS) enables internal developers to collaborate on code development through a web browser or IDE client leveraging a pretty extensive integrated set of features. Whilst Azure Automation enables many of the manual, time-consuming deployment and management tasks to be configured and automated across cloud and hybrid environments. This has the potential to significantly reduce errors and save time, meaning businesses can once again reduce costs safe in the knowledge they have delivered the desired end-state app architecture with utmost security and ROI.

"DevOps is not a new concept to start-ups but for larger enterprises, it's historically been much harder to implement, and many businesses have fallen back on traditional approaches to get new capabilities launched. But now with even greater choice of app deployment services, DevOps is back onto the boardroom agenda," says Dan Scarfe, Founder of New Signature UK.

"If you are currently in a state where launching new capabilities takes months, DevOps will take that pain away. It will shift your business into an app dev/deployment cycle that takes days, not weeks or months. It will help bring together your business processes, people and products which ultimately means greater value being delivered to your users and customers."

What else can you do with this capability? Modern apps aren't just about bringing legacy into the cloud, instead it's also about tapping into previously unavailable potential. In the new world there is greater scalability and faster time to market than could ever have been imagined in the legacy world. Once opportunity is presented through the

modernisation of your business, and you have the cloud platform to work with, there is a massive opportunity to spin up new products and services very quickly that help your business to capitalise on market opportunity, to transform customer experience, or simply out-pace the competition. DevOps plays a huge role in this. This is the piece that takes business from using modern apps to optimise and enhance operations into the white space transformation where they are entering new markets or unlocking previously untapped revenue streams. The only limit to the business is it's own vision. Modern Apps, the cloud and DevOps is the engine that will take them there.

Modern Apps for a Modern Business

Technology is moving at break-neck speed and the opportunities available to companies are numerous, from harnessing the power of AI and machine learning to building a tablet app. The world is now driven by mobile and cloud, a world in which legacy apps have a shrinking window of ROI and innovation. Cloud-native apps and cloud-modernised enterprise applications will play an increasingly critical role for many organisations, which is why business should now focus on THE critical question – are my apps fit for purpose in the digital age and are they enabling my business to drive competitive advantage? From application modernisation to DevOps and automation, New Signature can provide the tools and services to help you create a modern app infrastructure for your modern business that delivers on that promise.

The speed of innovation shouldn't be seen as something to be concerned about, instead it should fill your business and developers with optimism. Free from the constraints of legacy, with a cloud platform that provides reliability, scalability, and far faster time to market, the opportunities are endless.

New products can move from concept to live in the blink of an eye, capturing new opportunities faster than the competition and truly providing users with a differentiated offering.



About New Signature

New Signature is a cloud-first, full-service Microsoft solution provider focused on delivering great customer experiences through transformative business solutions. The New Signature team delivers full lifecycle solutions—from project inception and planning, through deployment to ongoing support, management and maintenance.

To find out more, email hello@newsignature.com, visit www.newsignature.com or check out [@newsignatureuk](https://twitter.com/newsignatureuk).