FUJITSU

Toll Group

Modernising data platform with Azure

Toll needed to improve the reliability of the reports and data provided to its customers. Its ageing legacy solution, and the resulting data quality decrease, led to a decision to invest in a modern data platform in the cloud.

Challenge

Toll needed to stabilise its legacy solution. It also had to consolidate data that was being processed from separate locations and returning differing reporting results.

Solution

Fujitsu helped Toll build a cloud-based modern data platform and reporting solution, while alleviating pressure from its legacy solution to enable its continued operation.

Outcomes

- Built an industrial-strength data platform on Azure
- Provided a more stable, interim environment by stabilising the legacy platform
- Reduced the number of customer support incidents

"We've got a reliable and trusted data source now. We have invested in and built industry-leading data analytics and reporting, and this will help in customer retention."

Michelle Shirton, Head of Digital, Toll Global Forwarding

30%

fewer 'faulty' or 'missing' reporting incidents

Growing needs for a reliable data platform

A division of Toll Group, Toll Global Forwarding, provides international freight forwarding and supply chain management services, with more than 70 offices across the world. Its focus is wide and diverse, ranging from port-to-port solutions and multi-tasking supply chain services to specialised transport for perishable goods. It is a trusted partner in logistics and has been consistently expanding for decades to meet customer needs.

"Toll has grown its business both locally and globally," says Peter McAllister, Programme Manager at Toll Group. "And we ended up with a whole range of small systems that we were trying to operate a global business on." Toll's freight forwarding customers rely on the quality of their daily reports, it was imperative the data was reliable, uniform and available in real time.

Over time, the separate data solutions amalgamated into two instances of the core on-premises operating system. Merging them created a foundation that was not fit for purpose for the global business it served. "Cracks started to appear," says Michelle Shirton, Head of Digital for Toll Global Forwarding, figuratively. "We decided it was time to move to the next level and future-proof the way we manage our data."

Toll needed something new—a reliable modern data platform, located securely in the cloud, that would consolidate data and provide trusted reporting solutions for the business as well as a scalable design that would pave the way for self-serve reporting. The company turned to its trusted partner, Fujitsu Data & AI, to help it reach this goal.

Tackling two priorities at the same time

The first task was to take some pressure off the legacy database, so Fujitsu Data & AI helped Toll review it to understand which parts needed to be stabilised first. It also helped the company ascertain which reports were problematic and which data sets needed to be targeted to reduce the load and mitigate risk. "This initial work meant that we could service our customers' needs while building a replacement platform," says McAllister.

While stabilising the legacy solution, Fujitsu Data & AI began constructing an industry-standard modern data platform on Azure while tackling the task of completely rewriting and redefining the core business logic. It also ensured a secure cloud environment by performing additional work to comply with the company's stringent security architecture requirements.

Fujitsu Data & AI migrated a big portion of the data in just under four months, further reducing the strain on the legacy platform. "Simply moving two of our biggest subscribed reports out of the legacy platform reduced the number of support incidents by 30%, and the number and size of outages have dropped remarkably," comments Shirton. "We are also dramatically reducing the managed service agreement for the legacy environment as a result of the migration."

Existing data models on the new platform still need rebuilding, and calculations in existing reports need to be reverse engineered due to the legacy solution's original design. "Each individual data element needs to be validated and almost redesigned before it's put into the new system," says Shirton. "So it's not a simple 'lift and shift' task. It's a more complex 'lift, remodel and fit' project."

About the customer

Toll Group is a global freight forwarding, transport and logistics solutions provider with over 130 years of experience solving shipping, transport and supply chain challenges for its customers. This Australian-based subsidiary of Japan Post employs over 16,000 people across 500 sites in 27 markets and boasts a forwarding network that spans 150 countries and supports over 20,000 customers.

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months to migrate a big portion of legacy data

Once finalised, the new solution will encompass all data from all business locations but pull information from just one place—the final destination of the journey. It will eventually allow Toll to retire the legacy solution, which will result in significant financial savings per annum. It will also give customers access to powerful data in real time by enabling them to self-serve and explore data easily through the customer-facing portal, providing everyone with reports when and as needed, while ensuring that the results are always correct and reliable.

Toll's further plans include building an allocation management tool and enabling predictive capabilities and supply chain visibility. "In the past, oil was the lubricant of the transport industry, but in the future, the lubricant is data," says McAllister. "This kind of work depends on the modern data platform."

Growing data management capabilities

Although the project is ongoing, the early results are clear and tangible. "We've got a reliable and trusted data source," says Shirton, pointing out that improvements to the service level and system availability as well as the reduction in the number of faults and bugs had another important outcome. "It's about retention," she says. "Through this journey not only have we invested in and built industry-leading data analytics and reporting, but we've also been able to keep customers who had been negatively impacted by the previous platform."

All this was made possible by the agile work relationship between the two companies because; due to the nature of the challenge, priorities sometimes shifted during the project. "It speaks of the maturity of our relationship with Fujitsu Data & AI, that we dealt with U-turns throughout this project and it still delivers the kind of results that we're expecting, without pistols at dawn," says McAllister. "It is a very important reflection of the way that this relationship works and the way we get things done together."

But, just as importantly, Fujitsu Data & AI demonstrated new ways of working and helped Toll upskill its employees, who have been developing a new set of skills in data management, ensuring that the company will be able to continue the project and drive it further in the future.

"They really helped us," says Shirton. "They spent a lot of time helping us establish data governance sessions and put together a whole operating model that we still refer to. Fujitsu Data & AI helped us uplift our capability in this space. Had we not partnered with them, I don't think we would have our global forwarding business as matured as it is right now."

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