Ensono
Hybrid IT: Formulating the Right Blend

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T he art of war has a few teachings that surprisingly relate well to running a business today. One key takeaway is the importance of balancing between the resources spent on the frontline for conquering, and the magnitude of defense back home, which protects the riches to sustain the kingdom. Enterprise CIOs are often caught between two personas in a similar way. While one part aims at 'keeping the lights on' with the existing legacy infrastructure, the other is a futurist, envisaging and executing a digital transformation to 'rope in' next-gen infrastructures. In essence, the IT function is the quintessential bridge that carries the onus of passing the enterprise-wide workload over to the new era of private and public cloud. Although public

cloud provisions like AWS, offer a great set of tools to configure virtual environments, the operability of such technologies require skill and expertise levels that are unavailable to a majority of enterprises. Moreover, the question still remains on how organizations can make their high-performance consumer-facing applications in the cloud interact and send queries to the non-cloud systems that commonly house the data sought by the cloud apps. The convergence of legacy and the future is where Ensono comes in, making the transition easy, seamless, and purpose-driven for over 150 clients across the world. This hybrid IT infrastructure service provider not only implements clients' cloud strategies, helping them make the steps toward flexibility and agility but also substantiates the existing investments that may be outdated. A combined and holistic view of both worlds gives Ensono the edge in offering clients financial efficiency, operational stability, and ease of troubleshooting in their managed services.

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According to Jeff VonDeylen, the CEO of Ensono, "Almost every client we speak to is undergoing some form of digital transformation, either in just IT or their entire business function. They can easily purchase and fire up a virtual machine in the public cloud, inspired by an article read from the seatback magazine of an airline. But when it comes to cost-optimization, we help clients build an entire environment that is resilient, 'performant,' and secure." An overview of the managed AWS services provided by Ensono reveals the true amount of diligence required to make a successful migration. Ensono clients receive cradle-to-grave services including—but not limited to—design of compliant, cost-effective, and network-efficient strategies for migration; execution of traditional ITSM components such as monitoring, troubleshooting, change management, and security and performance configurations. Most importantly, clients notice the value delivered to their business in terms of migration, financial outcomes, and the changes in workflow and culture within the organization.

"This is what we do best—building cloud strategies for our clients," said Brian Klingbeil, EVP of technology and strategy at Ensono. "What our clients do best is work with the great environments we put forth and manage for them." Add to that, the continuous developments around AWS capabilities like auto-scaling and turning-off of unutilized environments, a whole new set of unexplored possibilities exemplify the benefits clients can experience when working with a managed service provider for public clouds. Ensono utilizes platforms like Ansible, architectures like Terraform, and tools like Datadog to create a unified approach to configuration management, application deployment, task automation, and the overall migration in a hybrid scenario. The company works closely with AWS, with a dedicated DevOps team focused on productizing the services being perpetually released by Amazon. Even trends as recent as serverless architectures, Lambda, and subtle tweaks to ECS containers are quickly incorporated in Ensono's range of expertise.

Mastery in Hybrid IT

Ensono institutionalized a separate business unit, an incubator that was launched with 26 AWS certifications at the beginning of this year. In a short span of nine months, the number rose to 75 certifications, primarily due to the incubator's relentless focus on the delivery of services to benefit the client. The company has more than 1100 associates and over 700 AWS accreditations to its name, with both numbers constantly growing

along with an expanding client base. Ensono also is working towards every associate that's working in its first line of engagement and answering client calls, has at least one, if not two AWS certifications to address and resolve all issues quickly and efficiently. "We are a global organization with leaders in both our U.S. and U.K. offices focused on implementations, product engineering, and work-level support," explains Brett Moss, SVP and GM of Hyperscale Cloud at Ensono.

Ensono categorizes its global clients into four broad categories— the ones that don't use AWS at all, the organizations that are dabbling and experimenting with the public cloud, those that are advanced adopters, and the enterprises building out their own DevOps teams. Ensono works extensively with clients that are using AWS services already, helping them get to the stage of advanced adopters, but also sees great market potential in those that don't, or scarcely, but have expertise in using the public cloud, more so, to deliver mission-critical workloads in a production-like manner. "We see value in delivering best-of-breed proof-of- concepts, in conjunction with AWS, for our clients," says Moss. In one instance, a large specialist electronics retailer in the U.K., who was using SAP Hybris earlier, was trying to gauge how to use AWS to its business advantage. Ensono partnered with the client, defined their success criteria, and utilized the automation of their tooling to wrap the delivery and deployment of an entire environment for them in 48 hours. Needless to say, the client signed an agreement with them to move forward, shortly thereafter.

Client Success Ingrained in the Culture

Attributing the company's success to its philosophy, Jeff says, "We believe it is important to have the business conversation first, determining what our clients are trying to achieve before unthinkingly proposing that we migrate all their servers to the public cloud. That is why we have accreditation in all platforms— mainframe, private, and the public cloud—so that we can deliver a solution rather than sell a product." This approach forms a critical component of the culture at Ensono. In every associate meeting, an avatar-like persona of the clients sits in the discussions, making every decision made at Ensono as one that would be so if a client was present during the deliberation. The company also has a Client Advisory Board, comprising the clients with whom Ensono shares long-term partnerships. As part of an all-day work session with Ensono, the board meets for 90 minutes in a single sitting to discuss and formulate a SWOT analysis of the company, in the strict absence of Ensono's associates or sales pitch initiatives. "While our clients think of this initiative as 'brave,' I think it would be rather foolish of us not to do it. The Advisory Board not only gives our clients the ability to shape our roadmap and know that their

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opinion is integral to our business, but also helps us stay highly relevant and valuable to them," explains Klingbeil.

The team sees an increasing shift toward edge-computing driven by both their clients as well as AWS. Further, Ensono sees a rising need for the migration of major enterprise workloads to AWS for acceleration and optimization. These workloads, traditionally known to have been cumbersome and complex, can be auto-scaled and operated on with Ansible and Terraform to turn off unused environments, with the expertise that Ensono brings to the table. "Today, the public cloud still claims a very small share of the global IT spend, which amounts to trillions of dollars. With the rapid adoption of the public cloud, we are going to see this change in its favor," notes VonDeylen. In the backdrop of such developments, with a majority of organizations still stuck in the friction of a complex hybrid approach, Ensono accelerates their cloud adoption strategies with a panoramic vision and a laser focus on improving business outcomes. CR