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Case Study:

Cloud-based Technology as a Growth Driver in Mining

Capstone Mining switches to a cloud-based solution to improve business processes and better control costs as changes occur within the mining industry.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Capstone Mining Corp. is a Canadian base metals mining company, focused on copper. Capstone has three producing mines - the Pinto Valley copper mine located in Arizona, US, the Cozamin copper-silver mine in Zacatecas State, Mexico and the Minto copper mine in Yukon, Canada. In addition, Capstone has two development projects; the large scale 70% owned copper-iron Santo Domingo project in Region III, Chile, in partnership with Korea Resources Corporation, and the 100% owned Kutcho copper-zinc project in British Columbia, Canada, as well as exploration properties in Chile and US.

Capstone's strategy is to focus on the optimization of operations and assets in politically stable, mining-friendly regions, centered in the Americas. They are headquartered in Vancouver, Canada and listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX).



THE CHALLENGE

Capstone Mining wanted to focus its IT resources on adding value to the business while improving service levels and business continuity while reducing cyber risk, operating costs and capital. The company had already moved email, collaboration and file storage to the cloud with Office 365. Based on this very positive experience, they made the decision to migrate most of their key applications to Microsoft's Azure cloud.

Capstone made the decision to seek a partner experienced in transitioning organizations to the cloud. In doing so, Capstone would need a process that would facilitate a gradual, phased decommissioning of existing data centers while allowing their existing operations and assets to continue running.

THE SOLUTION

Softlanding's experience with cloud-based systems, along with the fact that they hold six Gold Cloud Microsoft Partner Competencies and are one of only three "Tier 1" System Integration Partners within

Canada, made them the clear choice for Capstone.

Softlanding reviewed Capstone's existing IT strategy and analyzed how the viability of the cloud fit within that strategy. Softlanding created a strategic plan and high level road-map by engaging with all IT stakeholders during the design process and helped facilitate the selection of Microsoft Azure because of its hybrid technology. Azure's hybrid approach would allow for a phased migration to the cloud while maintaining existing operations at select, on premises data centers.

As a strong Microsoft Partner, Softlanding played a crucial role in ensuring that Capstone's journey to the cloud was planned, deliberate, and executed seamlessly.

IMPLEMENTATION

Softlanding began by working closely with Capstone's IT stakeholders to review and analyze all existing technology and related business processes. Formal plans were drawn up including the creation of a road map for the cloud as well as formal design documentation describing its implementation within Azure.

Roles and responsibilities were then assigned and implementation started with the migration of ERP applications and workloads to the cloud from servers located at several data centers. Softlanding's formal plan included a validation process that targeted Azure's site recovery framework for the initial migration. This allowed assets to be tested on representations of production data before they were committed to the cloud, and in turn,

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provided a high level of confidence that everything was functioning correctly before decommissioning on premises data centers.

THE BENEFITS

Switching to a cloud-based solution provided a number of cost-reduction benefits most notably the ability to decommission data centers and the elimination of costly recurring hardware upgrades. In addition, the testing of updates can now be performed on real server data during migrations, and disaster recovery capabilities are inherently improved, both through the relocation of assets to a remote, cloud based system and through Azure's disaster recovery mechanisms for testing and validating data without affecting production systems.

The use of Azure also made it easy to introduce chargeback/showback functionality. This allows Capstone to tag resources with cost center information so that system costs can be easily tracked and charged back to the appropriate department or mine. Licensing costs were also reduced by rolling existing software licenses into a service based consumption model. This means that license costs are only incurred during usage now, rather than as upfront, permanent costs which were typical with the traditional permanent licensing model.

With all of these benefits introduced by the switch to Azure, the company no longer has to worry about large fixed costs for IT infrastructure. The migration to the cloud has transformed these costs from a capital expenditure to an operational expenditure, allowing for better control of costs as changes occur in the mining industry. Most importantly, this allows the Capstone team to focus on improving business processes and optimizing mining operations, rather than the costs and issues of traditional IT infrastructure and data centers.

In the end, Softlanding planned and executed the migration seamlessly, allowing Capstone to continue operations during migration and ultimately meeting their goal of transforming their IT infrastructure from an operational liability into a competitive asset.

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By leveraging the cloud services offered by Softlanding and Microsoft, we are allowing our IT professionals to focus on using information and technology in innovative ways to add value to our business while, at the same time, reducing costs, increasing service quality and improving our cyber risk profile. So far, we are meeting or exceeding expectations in all these areas.

-D James Slattery, SVP and CFO
Capstone Mining Corp.

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WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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