

Thrifty Car Rental | Transportation | Middle East & Africa | Intelligent Infrastructure

Thrifty, investing in a zero-downtime release process

Client profile

Thrifty Car & Van Rental UK has come a long way since it started. Scot Group Ltd, who operate both the Dollar and Thrifty rental brands in the UK, is the largest privately owned rental company in the country.

Much of this success is attributed to their focus on delivering a superior customer experience, as well as their ability to provide B2B and B2C rental services.

'As part of Thrifty's continued growth, updates to our mission-critical booking and rental systems were required.

After strategic evaluations, we chose Dimension Data to assist with the modernisation of these systems.'

Jason Harker
Director of IT, Thrifty

Summary

Thrifty Car & Van Rental UK experienced an increase in demand, driven by large B2B customer acquisitions. To handle this growth, Thrifty worked with Dimension Data to assist with future-proofing core digital systems, defining a strategy and understanding the challenges of their current systems. We ran a series of cloud strategy workshops, which focused on what the replacement solutions would be. We were then able to scope and execute the software and application changes required, while implementing a zero-downtime release process and providing critical operational managed services. All of these updates combined ensured a continuous evolution, reliability and mission-critical system availability, allowing Thrifty to offer a superior quality of commercial and private rental services.

Vision

The challenge: zero-downtime

Throughout their more than 40 year history, Scot Group has maintained a strategic expansion plan. The challenge presented to Thrifty, as part of this strategy, reached a tipping point in 2017 when they experienced a surge in rental demand driven by large B2B customer acquisitions. This growth allowed them to make further investments in their IT environment to ensure that the core digital systems for rental and corporate bookings could cater for current and projected demand.

These systems are the cornerstone of Thrifty's operations. As they experience variable loads based on bookings volume they had been deployed to AWS by Thrifty's internal teams to take advantage of the on-demand, scalable functionality that comes with public cloud. In addition, these systems are highly secure due to the transaction of rental bookings and any modernisation had to ensure continued PCI-DSS compliance.

With the strategy defined and challenges clearly understood, several initiatives were started by Thrifty as part of its IT investment:

- ensure operational reliability and overall service availability
- support application modernisation
- ensure technology innovation
- ensure the maximum security of the service and customer data

Which technologies?

- Cloud computing

Which services?

- Managed Cloud Services
- Cloud Consulting Services

Which partners?

- AWS

'Dimension Data helped identify optimisations with both the software/ application and infrastructure architecture

on AWS, execute the deployment, migration and provide a 24/7 managed service all while ensuring our PCI-DSS certification was not jeopardised.'

Jason Harker

Director of IT, Thrifty

Transformation

The cloud transformation

In reviewing their core IT initiatives, Thrifty made a strategic decision to bolster its capability through a cloud managed service provider model. Through a series of cloud strategy workshops, they identified us as being able to provide the optimal blend of operational and technology transformation experience.

Following our Cloud Transformation Framework, the first sprint of work was to deploy and modernise a greenfield replacement of the core rental and booking systems. The software was updated, providing greater governance and architecture adherence.

This, combined with infrastructure as code definition and a new blue/green application release management strategy, integrated smoothly into the Thrifty code pipeline.

This replacement solution was built using a combination of native AWS IaaS and PaaS services to achieve immediate PCI-DSS re-certification. This helped overcome many security complexities often experienced in traditional on-premises environments.

The final, rigorous testing, acceptance, and go-live were executed seamlessly with zero downtime or impact on customers.

Results

Faster release processes

Our experience and cloud automation products were successfully integrated into the Thrifty application development process to support a much faster release process with zero-downtime.

As well as a 20% reduction in AWS costs, the client has seen a 12-fold increase in application releases, moving from once per quarter to many per week.

All of this is underpinned by a service governance framework that provides operational responsibility, transparency while supporting tactical and strategic change.