

Olikka helps Joval Wine Group uncork the full benefits of the cloud



Challenge: Joval Wine Group wanted to migrate to Microsoft Azure

Joval Wines knew that the cloud would benefit their business but didn't have the skills in-house to handle the migration.

Solution: Partner with Olikka to facilitate the migration

Joval Wines partnered with Olikka to facilitate their migration to Microsoft Azure, bolstering security and implementing best practices.

Results: A 66 percent reduction in servers and a 40 percent reduction in IT costs

After migrating all of their workloads and apps to Microsoft Azure, Joval Wines reduced their operating costs and unlocked new scalability.

Established in 1963, [Joval Wine Group](#) is a family-owned collection of trading entities that span the full breadth of the wine industry. They include grape growing and production (Joval Family Wines), wholesale distribution (Red+White and Mezzanine) and warehousing/logistics (BAM Wine Logistics). They have offices, vineyards, and warehouses throughout Australia and New Zealand, and alliances in Asia, Europe, and North America.

While Joval stays true to its winemaking roots, its approach to IT is anything but traditional. Led by CTO Andrew Stoneham, Joval has been pursuing digital transformation for years. Recently, in an effort to make its IT infrastructure more scalable, agile, and secure, Joval decided to migrate all of its workloads from on-premises data centers to the cloud. When it came time to select a cloud, Joval saw [Microsoft Azure](#) as an easy choice. Because Joval was already using [Microsoft 365](#) and [Dynamics 365](#), the interoperability and industry-leading security of Microsoft Azure made it a natural fit.

Knowing that this was going to be a significant project, Stoneham began recruiting outside help. When he spoke to the local Microsoft team, they recommended he reach out to [Olikka](#), an Australian-based consultancy specializing in cloud-based, modern workplace solutions. Instantly, Joval knew they had found the right partner for the job. "We knew the cloud was going to offer us a much better solution, but we didn't have all the required skills in-house to get us where we wanted to be," recounts Stoneham. "From the very beginning, we had a really good feeling about Olikka as a partner."

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Migrating to Microsoft Azure

From the outset of the project, Joval was clear about what they were expecting from Olikka. “We needed a trusted partner who could help us set up our Microsoft Azure environment correctly the first time,” notes Stoneham. “There’s always some inherent risk when moving 100 percent of your resources from on-premises to the cloud, so we were looking to Olikka for Azure best practices – really doing everything possible to avoid things like cost overruns or governance issues. They really helped keep us on track.”

Based on their experience with cloud migrations, Olikka began Joval’s journey to the cloud with an assessment of their current environment, carefully determining which workloads and apps would be suitable for the cloud and the order in which they should be migrated. As part of this process, the Olikka team identified a number of servers that could be repurposed or shut down, reducing their server fleet by two-thirds and their infrastructure costs by about 40 percent. Once the initial analysis was complete, Olikka set up an [Azure Recovery Services](#) vault to replicate and store Joval’s data, designed a meticulous migration plan, and began the migration. Through close collaboration with Joval, Olikka kept the migration on track and ensured that all deadlines were met, completing the entire project in under nine months.

Olikka did more than just keep the migration on track. They also taught Joval’s IT team how to handle its new cloud environment. “We needed to upskill our internal team so we didn’t have to outsource the entire migration,” recounts

Stoneham. “I was really looking to build some capability internally, and Olikka was more than willing to help. They guided us through the first few workloads, then set us up so we could do the remainder ourselves.”

“Olikka is a big believer in teaching our customers how to manage their own cloud environments wherever possible,” adds Kristijan Damjanoski, Technical Consultant at Olikka. “We don’t just do ‘lift and shift’ migrations like so many other firms, we actually held workshops with Joval to walk them through Microsoft best practices for the cloud, as well how to execute the migration and maintain their new environment. We helped them migrate the first five or ten apps, then the Joval team handled the rest—it was pretty awesome.”

Enhancing collaboration with Microsoft Teams

As part of Joval’s cloud migration, Olikka helped them implement [Microsoft Teams](#) to enhance collaboration. “It’s been a bit of a game-changer for us,” notes Stoneham. “Like all businesses in Australia, the first outbreak of COVID-19 forced us to shift to a work from home model within a few days. Our people got comfortable using Teams very quickly, it’s quite intuitive, and it’s had some sizable business impacts. Historically, our business relied heavily on phone calls and conference bridges, but now, everyone is using Teams and is collaborating much better. It’s become our default tool, and it’s been incredibly well received. Now, we have our New Zealand winemakers joining meetings to provide our Melbourne team with live video updates of the current harvest, from the vineyard.”

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Like all of us, employees can sometimes be slow to embrace change and new tools. However, thanks to Joval's culture of innovation, paired with the pressing need to enable remote work and collaboration, Joval has seen rapid employee adoption of Microsoft Teams. "Microsoft Teams has been invaluable. After COVID-19 hit, we were able to smash through all those traditional change management barriers and get the entire group using Teams for productive collaboration within a few days. This has made the working from home model far more effective than we could have imagined." Stoneham explains further, "We are taking maximum advantage of this wave of adoption to unlock the full capability of Teams. With basic collaboration embedded, we are now in the process of replacing our file servers, PABX, and contact center with Teams-based solutions. Cost and collaboration benefits aside, this approach enables our people to perform most of their daily tasks in a single user interface that works on any device."

Securing Joval's cloud environment

Following the cloud migration, Olikka helped Joval conduct a deep security audit of its new cloud environment. "We worked with Joval to go

through everything from network security groups to which ports had to be open," recounts Damjanoski. "We operate on the best practice of 'block everything, only poke holes where required'. We also introduced other Microsoft security tools such as [Azure Bastion](#) and [Azure Security Center](#) to ensure Joval employees only have access to what they need to do their jobs."

To further reduce business risk, Joval also engaged Olikka to implement a disaster recovery solution. "The goal was to ensure that even if there was a cloud outage at one of our locations, our key business services would be able to reroute through another location and stay online" explains Stoneham. "With Joval 100 percent in the cloud, everything needs to be covered for their business," adds Rheann Baker, Account Manager at Olikka. "It's quite literally where everything is being held, and they don't have that on-premises fallback anymore, so this disaster recovery solution was essential."

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Enabling business impact by freeing up the IT team

When asked what the biggest benefit of Joval's cloud migration has been, Stoneham points to his IT team. "It's really enabled our IT team to focus more on delivering business solutions and less on maintaining our servers." Stoneham explains further, "Working right across our three businesses, the technology group is in that rare position of having a 360-degree view of our business processes and opportunities for improvement and now, we're taking advantage of that. The profile of our team has really shifted in recent times from back of house to partnering with the business and driving the digital transformation required to maintain our market leading position."

An additional benefit, which Stoneham says he didn't really anticipate, was the ability to scale the cloud environment down. "Everyone always talks about the unlimited scale of the cloud, that it can go as big as you need it to, but as COVID hit, we were able to reduce our cloud costs by a third because our transaction volumes dropped. That ability to scale down was invaluable, and now that things are getting back to normal, we can turn it right back up. That flexibility has been fantastic."

Looking ahead

With all of their infrastructure now in the cloud, Joval has plans to continue their digital transformation. To enable more innovation, they plan on maintaining their partnerships with Olikka and Microsoft. "Since migrating to Azure, we've been working with a really proactive account management team from Microsoft," notes Stoneham. "We meet monthly and actively look at opportunities to advance our cloud capabilities. Just in the last 12 months, Microsoft has facilitated engagements for us around security, data analytics, disaster recovery, and collaboration, all to help us better leverage the cloud investments we've already made." Joval is excited for the future, and with the power of Microsoft Azure behind them, they know that the opportunities to enhance their business are virtually limitless.



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