



CASE STUDY

Taking a Major Consumer Brand Into the Cloud

451 Planning Advisors and 451 Research Advisors team up to develop an integrated Digital Infrastructure Roadmap™ helping a leading consumer products company transition its global e-Commerce retail website and multi-platform application services to a cloud environment.

AT-A-GLANCE

CLIENT	A major global consumer products brand
LOCATION	United States
DATA CENTER TYPE	Hosted
INDUSTRY	Consumer Goods
PROFILE	The Client designs, manufactures, and sells some of the world's most recognizable and respected consumer product lines, used by both recreational and professional customers.
SCENARIO	To support a customer-facing e-Commerce website and digital service delivery, the Client needed to assess their current capabilities and develop an integrated IT strategy. There was an immediate need for a new hosting platform that could power a dynamic, high-volume consumer experience and support anticipated business growth. The long-term objective was to move towards a cloud environment and the company needed a defined pathway to achieve this goal.
SOLUTION SET	451 Planning Advisors Digital Infrastructure Roadmap™ 451 Research: analysis and industry benchmarking 451 Advisors: vendor selection process
RESULTS	<p>A performance-oriented, cost-effective long-term infrastructure strategy that aligns with the business goals and supports the company's growth to a become a billion dollar division in the next decade.</p> <p>An executable roadmap taking the company from the first step—moving from their current hosting provider to a new vendor who can accommodate more elastic demand—through the final stage of transitioning to cloud deployment, while sustaining a seamless global customer experience.</p>

SCENARIO

The Client designs and sells a line of high-end consumer products through major retailers, its own branded stores, and an e-Commerce website. Their customers include both recreational and professional users. To create rich brand engagement, the company promotes a range of digital products and services across multiple channels including web, mobile, personal devices, and home-gaming consoles.

The ecommerce infrastructure enables both business-to-consumer and partner channel business-to-business capabilities. The Client's technology team is responsible for all of these customer-facing touch points, currently running in three data centers managed by a major hosting provider. The situation was stable; however, the dynamic nature of the Client's business demanded a new, more responsive hosting solution that could rapidly scale up and down to meet fluctuations in demand due to periodic sales promotions, product releases, and seasonal variations.

With the large-scale rollout of a new product line planned, and an increasing emphasis on digital services, the Client believed that a cloud environment could provide a better solution for their long-term needs than the current legacy hosting platform. To ensure customer satisfaction and retention, the website and digital services had to offer high performance and high availability to support an evolving 24x7x365 global business. As the Client contemplated making an industry-leading transformation from managed hosting to cloud services for critical business delivery capability, they needed a consulting partner that could help them navigate through this new landscape. The Client turned to 451 Advisors to devise an integrated Digital Infrastructure Roadmap™.

SOLUTION

PHASE I – DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROADMAP

451 consultants brought their expertise in emerging technologies and service provider infrastructure planning, applying unique, proprietary methodologies and tools. The first steps in the project were conducting a review of the Client's existing strategies and transformational plans, and performing a gap analysis comparing the current state of infrastructure and operations to the desired future state. On top of the primary objective of transitioning managed hosting providers, the client also had a long "wish list" of enhancements, changes, and updates they wanted to implement to optimize their IT environment and operations.

With a dual focus on both the infrastructure and business requirements, 451 Planning Advisors helped the Client assess their various needs against the larger strategy objectives, looking at all systems delivering end customer and business partner commerce capabilities. 451 Research analysts validated the advantages of a hybrid cloud solution for the Client's business.

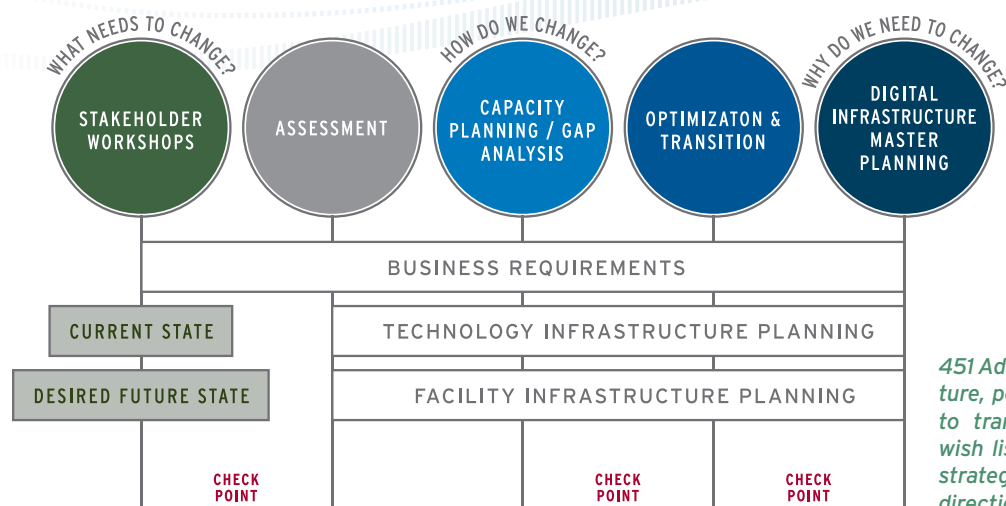
The website drives wide variability in demand, so a cloud environment offers the ability to scale capacity up and down extremely quickly—within days rather than weeks—to accommodate dynamic infrastructure demand. 451 Advisors helped the Client re-orient their infrastructure architecture and service model, and clearly understand the different decision points and the impacts of these decisions on both the infrastructure and the business.

What emerged from this process was a focused set of strategic priorities. 451 laid out a Digital Infrastructure Roadmap to achieve these priorities with defined stages and milestones for the next one-to-three years and beyond. The Roadmap encompasses an overarching understanding that transforming production application environments to the cloud is a multi-year journey that must have consensus, support, and funding. Key elements of the strategy include a mix of managed services and cloud (hybrid) production environments during the transformation, and developing a plan for acceptable risk mitigation allowing sensitive data to be placed in the public cloud.

PHASE II VENDOR STRATEGY AND SELECTION

The final project deliverable was an objective market analysis comparing a sample of service-providers, partner vendors, and hosting options. 451 Research analysts identified nine hosting providers who were well suited to provide the type of robust, dynamic environment the Client needed. In developing the Digital Infrastructure Roadmap, 451 Advisors had identified a set of unique business and technical requirements. 451 recommended that the Client engage with possibly two or more providers to achieve a best-fit match to their specific needs in the areas of managed hosting and disaster recovery.

Seeing the value of the insight and expertise 451 Advisors had contributed thus far on the project, the Client asked 451 to extend its engagement to consult on the solicitation and Request for Proposal. 451 outlined a scoring method encompassing 11 key criteria, and a cost model to compare how the Client's current price structure compared with the rest of the marketplace, helping ensure that the final vendor selection would yield an optimal balance of capabilities and services.



451 Advisors provided the structure, perspective, and expertise to transform their vision and wish list into a fully executable strategy and plan, with clear direction and actionable steps...

RESULTS

With the new Digital Infrastructure Roadmap as a guide, the Client team is confident in their ability to improve the flexibility, scalability, and resiliency of their operations by transitioning IT assets to a new data center provider without disrupting the global customer experience. The company is poised to reap the benefits of a new technology delivery model focused on rapid deployment, elastic demand profiles and alignment of technology and infrastructure planning. By adapting the IT management model, incorporating cloud technologies, and developing a robust disaster recovery plan, they are meeting current and future needs of both consumers and internal enterprise users.

Tapping into the 451 Research knowledge base helped save time in the evaluation and procurement process, narrowing the list of possible vendors to those who fit specific criteria that met the needs of the Client—and only the Client. 451 recommendations are unbiased and vendor-neutral, allowing the Client to rely on 451 Advisors to identify and assess the most viable hosting solutions.

The Client has found that 451 Advisors provided the structure, perspective, and expertise to transform their vision and wish list into a fully executable strategy and plan, with clear direction and actionable steps. By meshing together 451 Advisors' strategic planning expertise and 451 Research market insights and analysis, 451 was able to define a dynamic, integrated solution that will support the company's entire infrastructure as they grow over the next decade to become a billion dollar global enterprise.

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE: OUR MISSION & OUR PASSION:

451 Planning Advisors defines digital infrastructure as the entire enterprise-wide computing environment supporting your end users from edge to core, not just the data centers. Effective digital infrastructure transformation planning must align both technology and supporting data center infrastructure planning cycles to match dynamic business demands.

Our Digital Infrastructure Roadmap™ provides the framework for effective transformation planning in the areas of third-party, multitenant, or wholesale data operations; data center build/buy and lifecycle management; technology infrastructure optimization and "right sizing"; and more.

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451 Research® Advisory Services

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