



PFIZER: PFIZER'S CLOUD MIGRATION AND MODERNIZATION - SCALED AT SPEED WITH AWS AND ACCENTURE

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Speakers:

- Wes Barnes, Senior Director, Pfizer Digital Hosting Solutions
- Jon Harrison, Managing Director, North America Lead, Infrastructure Engineering, Accenture

Overview:

Pfizer, a leading research-based biopharmaceutical company, teamed up with AWS and Accenture to design a modernized cloud-based infrastructure in order to simplify digitizing drug development and enhance patient experiences. The goal was to standardize the operations and management using a single viewpoint through the AWS Console, making our work faster and easier.

>>Oh, welcome back to the CUBE. We continue our coverage here at AWS re:Invent 22. We're in the Venetian in Las Vegas, and this place is hopping. I'm tell you what, it is nearly standing room only. That exhibit floor is jam packed, and it's been great to be along for the ride here on Accenture's sponsorship of the Executive Summit as well. We'll talk about Pfizer today. You know them quite well, one of the largest

biopharmaceutical companies in the world, but their tech footprint is impressive, to say the least. And to talk more about that is Wes Barnes, Senior Director of Pfizer's Digital Hosting Solutions. Wes, good to see you, sir. Good to meet you, John And Jon Harrison, the North America Lead for Infrastructure Engineering

at Accenture. John, good to see you

>>As well. Good to see you as well. Thanks for joining us here.

>>Alright, so let's jump in. Pfizer, we have drugs, right? Pharmaceutical. Yes. Among the most prominent biopharms in the, in the world. But your tech capabilities and your tech focus, as we were talking about earlier, has changed dramatically in the 18 years that you've been there. Yep. Now, talk about that evolution a little bit to where you were and what you have to be now.

>>Yeah. It's interesting. When I started at Pfizer, IT was an enabling function. It was akin to HR or our facilities function. And over the past couple years, it's dramatically changed. Where Digital now is really at the center of everything we do across Pfizer. You know, it



really is a core strategic element of our business.

>>And, and those elements that you were talking about, just in terms of whether it's research, whether it's you're patient. So I don't wanna go through the laundry list, the litany of things, but the, the touch points with data and what you need it to do for you in terms of, you know, computations, what you, the list is long. Yep. It's pretty impressive.

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>> I mean shed some light on that. For us,

>>We cannot release a medicine without the use of technology. And if you think about research now, a huge component of our research is computational chemistry. Manufacturing medicines now is a, is a practice in using data and analytics and predictive machine learning and analytics capabilities to help us determine how to best, you know, apply the, the capabilities to, to deliver the outcomes that we need. The way in which we connect with patients and payers now is wholly digital. So, it's, it's an entirely different way of operating than it was 10 years ago.

In the past three years. Pretty remarkable in many respects, to say the least. I think, I mean, Jon, you've seen what Pfizer's been up to talk about maybe just this, the recent past and all that has happened and what they've been able to do.

>>Yeah, I mean, what is so exciting to me about working with a company like Pfizer and working in life sciences more broadly is the impact that they make on patients around the world, right? I mean, think about those past three years and Pfizer stepped up and met the moment for all of us, right? And as we talk a little bit about the role that we play together with Pfizer, with AWS in their journey to the cloud, it, it's so motivating for myself personally, it's so motivating for every single person on the team that we ask to spend

nights and weekends migrating things to the cloud, creating new capabilities, knowing that the end, at the end of the day, the work that they're doing is making the world a healthier place, right?

Yeah. We, we talk so much about modernization now, right? And, and it's, and, but it kind of means different things to different people depending on where you're coming into the game, right? Yeah. If you've been smart and been planning all along, then this, this is not a dramatic shift. In some cases though, for others it is. Right? Yeah. Traumatic, yeah. In some cases, for some people, for sure. Well, for Pfizer, I mean, talk about how do you see modernization and, and what does it mean to your operations?

>>Following our success of the Covid program 2021, I mean, it became evident to us that, you know, we needed to maintain a new pace of innovation and in fact, try to find ways to accelerate that pace of innovation. And as I said earlier, everything we do at Pfizer is centered around digital. But despite that, and despite 10 years of consolidating infrastructure and moving towards modern technology, last year, only 10% of Pfizer's infrastructure was in the native public cloud. So we had a, we had a problem to solve. In fact, I remember, you know, we had to build up our clinical systems to support the volume of work that we were doing for Covid 19 vaccine. We were rolling things into our data center to build up the capacity to achieve what we needed to achieve. Moving to the public cloud became more imperative to try to achieve the scale and the modern capabilities that we need.

And so where did you come into play here with this? Because obviously as a partner, you're right alongside for the ride, but you saw these inherent challenges that they had and, and how did Accenture answer the bell there?

>>Well, so look, I mean, we saw Pfizer react to the pandemic. We saw them seize the moment. We talked together about how IT needed to move quicker and quicker towards the cloud to



unlock capabilities that would serve Pfizer's business well into the future. And together we laid out some pretty ambitious goals. I mean, really moving at a velocity and a pace that I think for both Accenture and AWS surpassed the velocity and pace that we've done anywhere else. Yeah. Right? Yeah. So we've set out on an ambitious plan together. You know, I was kind of reflecting about some of the successes, what went well, what didn't in preparation for reinvent. And you know, many of the folks that'll listen to this will remember the old days of moving data centers when you'd have a war room, you'd have a conference bridge open the whole time. Someone would be running around the tile floor in the data center, do a task, call back up to the bridge and say, what do I do next? Right? Then when I think about what we did together at Pfizer in moving towards the public cloud, I mean, we had weekends, most weekends where we were running a wave with 10,000 plus discreet activities. Yeah. Wow. Right? So that old model doesn't scale. Right. And we really anchored,

>>You have a very crowded data center with a lot of people running into each other.

>>Have a whole lot of people running around, but we really anchored to, to an Accenture capability that we call myNav migrate. I know you guys have talked about it here before, so I won't go into that. But what we, what we found is that we approached this problem of velocity not as a technical problem to solve for, but as a loading and optimization problem of resources.

Thought about it just a little bit different way, and made sure that we could programmatically control, command and control of the program in a way that people didn't have to wait around all Saturday afternoon to be notified that their next activity was ready. Right. They could go out, they could live their day, and they could get a notification from the platform that says, Hey, it's about your turn. They could claim it, they could do it, they could finish it. And that was really important to us. I mean, to be able to control the program in that type of way at scale.

By the way, the reason we went as fast, it was a deliberate choice and, and you'll talk to plenty of, of folks who have a five-year journey to the public cloud. And the reason we wanted to move as fast as we did, and Jon talked about some of it, we wanted to get the capabilities to the business as quickly as we could. The pace of innovation was such that we had to offer native cloud capabilities. We had to offer them quickly. We also knew that by compressing the time it took to get to the cloud, we could focus the organization, get it done as economically as possible, but then lift all boats with the tide and move the organization forward in terms of the skills and the capabilities that we need to deliver modern outcomes.

>>So, you know, we talk about impacts internally, obviously with your processes, but beyond that, not just scientists, not just chemists, but to your, I mean, millions of customers, right? We're talking, you know, globally here. Yep. What kind of impacts can you see that directly relate to them and benefits that they're receiving by this massive technical move you've made?

Pfizer's mission is breakthroughs that change patient lives. I mean, the work that we do, the work that everyone he does with within Pfizer is about delivering therapies that, you know, provide health outcomes that make people live longer, live healthier lives. For us, modernizing our infrastructure means that we can enable the work of scientists to find novel therapies faster, or find things that perhaps couldn't have been found any other way without some of the modern technologies that we're bringing to bear, saving money within infrastructure and IT is a treasure that we can pour back into the important areas of research or development or manufacturing. We're also able to, you know, offer an, an ecosystem and a capability in, in which we connect with patients differently through digital mechanisms. And modern cloud enables that, you know, using modern, you know, digital experiences and customer experience, and patient experience platforms means that we can



use wearable devices and mobile technologies and connect to people in different ways and offer solutions that just didn't exist a couple years ago.

>>And so, I mean, you're talking about IOT stuff too, right? Hundred percent. Yeah. It's way out on the edge and, and personal mobile, in a mobile environment. And so challenges in terms of, of, you know, data governance and compliance and security, all these things, right? They come into play because it's personal health information. So how, as you've taken them, you know, to this public cloud environment, how much of a factor are those considerations? Because, you know, this is not just a product, a service, it's a, it's a live human being.

>>Yeah. I mean, you start with that, you think about it through the process and you think about it afterwards, right? I mean, that has to be a core factor in every stage of the program. And it was.

>>So in, in terms of where you are now, then, okay, it's not over.

>>It's never over.

>>You know, as good as you are today and as fast as you are and as accurate and as efficient. Yeah. Got to get better, right? You've got to stay competitive. Yeah. So, so where do you find that? Because, you know, with, with powers being what they are with speed and bullet, it is how much more is there to squeeze out of this rock?

>>There's a lot more to squeeze out of the rock. If you think about what we've done over the past year, it's about creating sort of a new minimum viable product for infrastructure. So we've sort of raised the bar and create an environment upon which we can continue to innovate. That innovation is, is, is going to continue sort of forever at, at this point. You know, the next focus for us is how to identify the business processes that deliver the greatest value ultimately to our patients. And use the modern platform that we've just built to improve those processes, to

deliver things faster, deliver new capabilities. Pfizer is making a huge investment in digital medicines, therapies that are delivered through smart devices, through wearables using, as I said, technology that didn't exist before. That wouldn't be possible without the platform that we've built. So, over the past year, we've come a long way, but I think that we've effectively set the table for all of the things that are yet to come.

>>So, Jon, how do, how do you then, as, as you've learned a lot about life science or, or, and certainly Pfizer with what, what they're up to. How do you then apply what you know about their world to what you know about the tech world and, and make it actionable for growth to make it actionable for future expansion?

>>Yeah. I mean, we start by doing it together, right? I, I think that's a really important part. Accenture brings a wealth of knowledge, both industry experience and expertise, technology experience and expertise. We work together with our clients like Pfizer, with our partners like AWS to bring the best across that power of three to meet clients where they're at, to understand where they want to go, and then create a bespoke approach that meets their business needs. And that's effectively what we're doing now, right? I mean, if you think about the phase that we've just went through, I mean, a couple of fast facts here, no pun intended, right? 7,800 server instances across 11 operating system versions, 7,500 databases across 20 database versions, right? 4,700 applications, 350,000 migration activities managed across an eight-month period.

>>In eight months. Yeah.

>>But that's not the goal, right? The goal is now to take, to Wes' point, that platform that's been developed and leverage that to the benefit of the business, ultimately to the benefit of the patient.

>>You know, why them, we have, we've talked a lot about Pfizer, but, but why Accenture? What, what, what's, because it's got to be a two-way street, right?



>>We've had a long partnership with Accenture. Accenture supports a huge component of our application environment at Pfizer and has for quite a long time. Look, we didn't make it easy on them. We put them up against a large number of, of world class SIs. But look, Accenture brought, you know, you know, sort of what I think of as the trifecta here. They brought the technical capabilities and knowledge of the AWS environment. They brought the ability to really understand the business outcomes that we were trying to achieve, and a program leadership capability that, you know, I think is world class. And Jon talked about myNav, you know, we recognized that doing what we were trying to do in the time that we were doing it required new machinery, new analytics and data capabilities that just didn't exist, automation that didn't exist. Some people experience capabilities that would allow us to interface with application owners and users at a velocity and a pace and a scale that just hasn't, hasn't been seen before at Pfizer. Accenture brought all three of those things together and I think they did a great job helping us get to where we need to be.

>>When you hear John rattle through the stats, like he just did, right? We talk about all, I mean, not that I'm gonna ask you to pat yourself on the back, but do you ever, he should, does, does it blow your mind a little bit, honestly, that you're talking about that magnitude of activity in that compressed period of time? That's extraordinary.

>>It's 75% of our global IT footprint now in the public cloud, which is, which is fantastic. I mean, look, I, I think the timing was right. I think Pfizer is in a little bit of a unique position coming off of Covid. We are incredibly motivated to keep the pace up, I mean, across all lines of business. So, you know, what we found is a really willing leadership team, executive leadership team, digital leadership team to endorse a change of this magnitude.

>>Well, it's a great success story. It's beyond impressive. So, congratulations to both you on that front and certainly you wish you continued

success down the road as well. Thank you. Thank you gentlemen. Thank you. Thank you about Pfizer. And boy, you talk about a job well done. Just spectacular. All right, you are watching our coverage here on the Cube where the AWS Reinvent 22 show. This is Executive Summit sponsored by Accenture, and you're watching the Cube, the leader in high tech coverage.

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