

SnapRetail Achieves Cost-Efficiency and Better Support with AWS



Executive Summary

SnapRetail, a provider of online marketing services to small and medium-sized businesses (SMB), was burdened by aging on-premise infrastructure. Several years of accumulated technical debt created an inconsistent user experience for customers as well as operational burdens and potential security risks for the company. SnapRetail engaged Risk Focus to address these concerns. Risk Focus developed a new infrastructure design and migration plan to AWS that significantly reduced SnapRetail's costs while providing it with a modern, maintainable infrastructure.

The Challenge

1. SnapRetail's on-premise infrastructure accumulated technical debt for several years, leading to performance issues and potential security gaps.
2. The company amassed large amounts of data over its 10-year history, which required it to continuously add storage, creating an operational and budgetary burden.
3. The infrastructure design included some tactical implementation choices to meet the needs of a very different customer base from what exists today. Therefore, a migration needed to include re-engineering to simplify the design, utilize new technologies, and remove unnecessary components.

Why AWS

As SnapRetail entered its second decade of business, the company needed to eliminate the risks associated with its legacy and expensive infrastructure. SnapRetail selected AWS because of its cost-effective solutions that scale for seasonal spikes in application usage. As a marketing solution for SMB, the demand for SnapRetail's product increases strongly during the holiday season. With the AWS Cloud, SnapRetail is confident that it will only pay for what it needs and that it will never find itself in an unsupported state in the future.

Why SnapRetail Chose Risk Focus

Sean McDonald, CEO of SnapRetail, realized that an aging colo-based infrastructure created risks to SnapRetail's business. He approached Risk Focus to provide alternatives. He said: "Our infrastructure was weighing us down. We needed the DevOps expertise of an AWS Partner like Risk Focus to implement a cloud-based infrastructure." After performing a business case analysis comparing the cost of SnapRetail's infrastructure versus the same capabilities in AWS, Risk Focus made a compelling case to migrate to AWS. The AWS Advanced Consulting Partner brought the expertise of an AWS DevOps Competency and was well suited to the task.

About SnapRetail

The SnapRetail logo, featuring the word 'SnapRetail' in a dark blue sans-serif font, followed by a teal square icon containing a white exclamation mark.

SnapRetail is an online technology company that offers a SaaS platform to help small and mid-sized businesses improve their digital marketing impact. The applications are offered within two branded experiences (snapretail.com and snap-rx.com), providing a full suite of digital marketing tools to retail businesses and independent pharmacies.

Using the SnapRetail Marketing Planning Calendar, users can create and schedule unified digital marketing campaigns using:

- Email messaging
- Social media posts
- Snap-hosted websites



Partner Solution

Risk Focus worked with SnapRetail to understand the company's specific business requirements, the needs of its customers, and the intricacies of the retail business, which comes with seasonal marketing demands. As a result, Risk Focus designed and built a secure AWS environment that includes:

- Scaling infrastructure to satisfy peak, seasonal-usage traffic
- A robust security model that follows AWS best practices
- On-demand lower environments for future development and testing
- A new build-and-deploy process using AWS CodeBuild
- A more cost-effective way of storing seldom-used assets leveraging S3 and Glacier

Additionally, Risk Focus built a more efficient way for SnapRetail to manage hundreds of security certificates for its customers relying on a Snap-hosted website. To ensure that all work is repeatable, Risk Focus used Infrastructure as Code methodology so that all infrastructure is defined using CloudFormation templates and parameterized to facilitate easily reproducible and consistent instantiation of future artifacts.

Results and Benefits

By partnering with Risk Focus, SnapRetail was able to break free from an outdated infrastructure that was slowing down operations and eating into the company budget. Now it remains focused on providing more value and a feature-rich experience to its customers. As McDonald shares, "We engaged Risk Focus to help us address problems with our aging infrastructure. Using AWS, they have helped us to see our infrastructure in an entirely new way. We are saving costs, we are spared security concerns, and we are able to better serve our customers."

In addition, Risk Focus helped SnapRetail establish DevOps best practices to ensure the optimal utilization of its cloud environment as it moves forward. The organization now has a robust and efficient build-and-deploy process in a multi-environment capacity, allowing it to quickly launch new features in the ever-changing world of digital marketing.

About Risk Focus

Founded in 2004, Risk Focus is a consultancy solving capital markets business problems with technology and insight. The firm combines business domain knowledge, technology expertise, and disciplined process to ensure the success of the most challenging projects in the industry. Some of the largest exchanges and investment banks operate on systems built by Risk Focus. The firm's practices include Custom Application Development, Regulatory Reporting & Compliance, DevOps & Cloud, Streaming Architectures, and IT Strategy. It is a Premier Confluent Systems Integrator and an Advanced AWS Consulting Partner with DevOps and Financial Services Competencies. Clients count on Risk Focus to provide outcomes that advance their objectives on time and on budget. For details, visit www.RiskFocus.com.

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