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Orchestrating IT modernization to drive business agility and innovation

Alpitour World

Business opportunity

In 2018, Alpitour World was already one of the largest travel and tourism companies in Europe. But the company's executive leadership had a bigger vision: a technology ecosystem designed and built for competitive advantage—a data-driven innovation engine for the company's customer-centric business strategy.

Laying the foundation required five years of phased IT transformation. By 2023, the team under Chief Innovation Officer Francesco Ciuccarelli had standardized the company's infrastructure landscape to resolve technical debt accumulated over years of business acquisitions.

However, the next phase of transformation would be their most ambitious. Critical B2C and B2B applications lived in an on-premises mainframe environment that was inflexible and expensive. Application logic was stable but difficult to modify.

Alpitour World needed application infrastructure engineered for innovation and business agility. Francesco's team decided the time was right to move core mainframe applications to a cloud platform for the scalable and flexible architecture. The new foundation would enable innovations like dynamic pricing, interactive and AI-driven trip planning, detailed itinerary curation, and flexible rebooking, providing Alpitour World customers with more personalized services.

Technical challenge

The team faced a complex transformation challenge. Alpitour World's applications were written in COBOL. A small team of internal subject matter experts (SMEs) maintained the applications and held all the company's institutional knowledge about them. Besides being few, these SMEs were not as skilled in the modern coding languages required to redevelop the applications for Amazon Web Service (AWS), the cloud platform Alpitour World chose in consultation with Kyndryl, their trusted IT services partner.

The applications themselves were monolithic, requiring careful decoupling from the software stack. They used special databases for mainframes and were also interwoven with an ecosystem of tools that had to be replaced as part of providing business continuity after migration.

Alpitour World needed to integrate the redeveloped applications with cloud-native applications they had already developed in parallel with the ongoing IT transformation projects. Those new customer-facing applications needed flexible access to mainframe application data to dynamically cross-promote services across Alpitour World's five business verticals.

Our Solution

Together, Alpitour World and Kyndryl built the business case for the mainframe-to-cloud transformation, including a discovery phase to assess artifacts, integrations, architectural impact and the overall complexity of the enormous effort.

With the business case approved, the unified team:

→ Refactored 1000s of COBOL programs into Java. Working in a DevOps pipeline they set up in AWS, the team used a tool from third-party partner, Astadia, to automate the initial conversions, then performed extensive testing and custom development to resolve issues. Getting the redeveloped applications to work efficiently with relational databases in AWS was especially complex, painstaking work.

→ Deployed the successfully converted applications in a production environment on flexibly scalable AWS hardware in a multi-zone region.

→ Mapped modern alternatives for legacy tools and migrated 1600+ FTP workflows and 100+ batch jobs using AWS-native and open-source tools.

→ Seamlessly cut-over from the on-premises mainframe to the AWS production environment as a big-bang operations event (October 2025) with zero disruption to business operations.

The power of partnership

Kyndryl collaborated in close partnership with AWS and Astadia to deliver the successful migration of the mainframe applications and tools.

The team used a conversion and testing framework to automate the initial conversions and reduce the time to application redevelopment.

Kyndryl collaborated with AWS to size Alpitour World's cloud environment and to optimize performance after the redeveloped applications were running on the cloud platform.

What progress looks like

Alpitour World achieved their IT transformation goal of an agile, scalable and resilient cloud-based foundation to support the company's innovation roadmap. Early results include:

→ 25–30% cost savings through elastic cloud infrastructure

→ Completely new continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD) pipelines enable the IT team, in partnership with the business, to define and rapidly implement specific use cases that will improve aspects of Alpitour World's customer experience

→ Increased business availability through highly resilient and scalable cloud resources, nearly eliminating the risk of a major operational crisis that requires all hands on deck, and relieving engineers of manual work related to increase and decrease in compute

→ Created a digital knowledge base regarding the decades-old critical core business applications to serve as an invaluable reference as Alpitour World strategically evolves IT to benefit customers

About Alpitour World

Alpitour World is Italy's leading tourism group: a symbol of professionalism, innovation and discovery, it has become part of the country's collective imagination, taking Italians around the world for more than 75 years. The Group is structured into five divisions that span the entire tourism value chain, with offices in Italy and abroad: Tour Operating, Aviation, Hotel Management, Incoming, and Travel Agencies. Each division represents excellence in its sector and, together, they contribute to the Group's overall strength and to new ways of experiencing travel.

What's your next digital business challenge? Let's tackle it together.

Start a conversation. →

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