Successful transition improves agility

When Noosa Shire Council outgrew their existing IT services, they needed to improve their digital agility and reliability quickly. This case study tells the story of the successful transition to Microsoft Azure thanks to Codify.

Objective:

Set up a more flexible and resilient IT solution

Noosa Shire Council de-amalgamated from the Sunshine Coast Council in 2014. At the beginning, they set up Software as a Service and Infrastructure as a Service with minimal on-premises infrastructure. The council's growth over the subsequent years began to put real pressure on their systems and raise serious concerns about backup and disaster recovery (both digital and physical).

Storage and performance both started to become issues. The council needed a solution to streamline processes and increase confidence when it came to backup, performance and reliability. An interesting challenge for Codify.

"When Noosa Shire Council was re-established, the leadership team knew it needed to focus on obtaining IT as a service. The Software as a Service removed reliance on in-house staff, but we weren't agile enough with emerging, temporary or unusual requirements."

"For example, we need to capture video data of storm water pipes and roads in real time. If someone handed over a terabyte of video, we'd need space for that data immediately. With IaaS it meant contract changes and they were taking too long."

JUSTIN THOMAS

– ICT Manager, Corporate Services, Noosa Shire Council

NOOSA COUNCIL

Industry	Local government
Core business	Council
Number of employees	450
Geographic area	Queensland
Workload migrated	Windows Server & SQL Databases

CODIFY

Solution found in the simplicity of Azure

Noosa Shire Council had started trying to implement other solutions to deal with their storage and performance issues, but without a structured and supported transition with an experienced partner, it was proving too difficult.

"We started using a different provider but it wasn't easy to manage. We outsourced our infrastructure requirements but lost some of our expertise. Ultimately the problem was we had a lack of awareness about how to solve the problems."

The Council knew it needed a solution and a partner to help them accurately implement it to ensure uptake and reduce downtime and data loss.

"We were already using some components of Azure and Microsoft Office 365 so we reached out to our Microsoft account manager. We told Microsoft that we were keen to explore Azure. They engaged us through the Microsoft FastTrack program, with Codify to deliver the backup and DR solution."

Codify's delivery of technical expertise and the Azure set up ensured the transition's success. They engaged with Noosa Shire Council over 10 days to ensure a smooth and fast implementation and conducted training so the Council team could learn how to maintain it themselves.

"Codify set up all our Azure backups and restores, tested server recoveries and then showed us how to perform these tests ourselves. Codify also did training and handoff so we could run everything in house moving forward. The level of training was invaluable."

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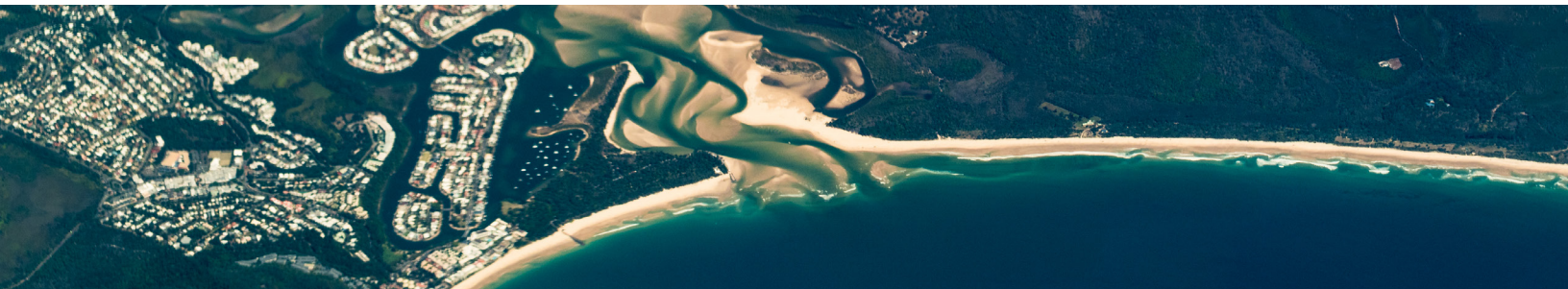
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CODIFY

The right choices delivering the best results

Security and longevity were both key elements in the Council's decision to go with Microsoft and Codify. Noosa Shire Council knows Microsoft won't be exiting the industry any time soon and, with Codify's expertise, the Council can continue to build its capabilities as new products, services and offerings are released. All in all, since the transition to Azure with Codify, the Council has experienced:

☐ **Boosted staff morale:** Significant improvements in sync times, capabilities and recovery systems had a positive impact on staff morale. *"Staff are enthusiastic!"* commented Justin Thomas. *"They have seen how powerful it is. Codify moved our existing AWS workloads to Azure. They showed us how to do restores of systems and how availability works, helping improve the availability of our cloud services."*

☐ **Improved customer support:** The Council needed greater system reliability, particularly for communiity resources open out of normal business hours, such as the local leisure centre. *"When our systems failed outside business hours, it greatly impacted transactions,"* noted Justin Thomas. *"We now have a superior backup and recovery process in place. This gives a much better service to the faclity and our community."*

☐ **Reduced recovery time:** Prior to the transition to Azure with Codify, Noosa Shire Council would take hours to recover files if a system failed. *"Now we can get things back so quickly, it literally takes minutes,"* said Justin Thomas.

☐ **Visibility of backups:** The training Codify gave the Noosa Shire Council team has truly empowered them. *"We can test it ourselves. We can be agile in responding to requests and we now have confidence that the systems will be available and easily recoverable,"* said Justin Thomas.

☐ **No more disruptions:** Previous upgrades and system changes meant downtime and disruption to the team and the community. With the transition to Azure with Codify, upgrades are now seamless. *"When we upgrade, we can now roll back to a previous version,"* noted Justin Thomas. *"We usually do this late at night. The work is invisible and goes completely unnoticed, exactly as you'd want an upgrade to be."*

"The public just want things to work. If things go wrong, people are quick to go to social media. Our Council wants to do our best by our constituents and provide the highest quality service we can. Codify removed the unreliability of the infrastructure and single points of failure for us, while providing all the benefits of the cloud with Azure, so we can deliver on that promise."

JUSTIN THOMAS
– ICT Manager, Corporate Services, Noosa Shire Council

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CODIFY

Words of advice

Finding the right IT partner and embracing the need for change are crucial to the success of a project like this.

"Working with an external party, like Codify, who are the experts in the challenges your business are facing is so important," says Justin Thomas. *"They can set up things more quickly and use learnings from other customers to provide the best service."*

"If you currently run things in house, you'll just try to rebuild what you have in house, but in the cloud. In reality, you must change the way you deliver the service and bring your whole team along for the ride. Codify knew this and were masters of it."

Looking ahead

The Council are talking with Codify about other possible Azure implementation projects including:

☐ **DNS management through Azure,**
☐ **shifting more server work to Azure,**
☐ **opportunities to improve their utilisation of their SQL Server, and**
☐ **looking at options to reduce IT infrastructure costs.**

"Codify are very easy to work with. They engaged with us at the right times and asked great questions. They gave us guidance and involved us in the decision making we needed to be involved in. They were very responsive. If we wanted to change priorities, they were flexible. They understood us and helped us set everything up. They also gave us great advice and are helping us look to the future."

JUSTIN THOMAS

– ICT Manager, Corporate Services, Noosa Shire Council

Codify's Managed Azure
protects your investments in Azure and keeps you in control.

Guidance
Make the right decisions as you plan and evolve your environment. Azure expertise on-tap. Adapt your cloud plan as Microsoft's offers and licenses change.

Governance
Control costs. Standardise. Categorise your environment into a structured IT portfolio. Sensible and understandable billing.

Support
Get personalised Azure support from Codify. Offload service requests for changes to Codify.

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