



# IT transformation helps Menzies' global expansion plans take flight



## Dynamic logistics and aviation business John Menzies plc needed a flexible, scalable IT infrastructure to support its ambitious growth plans. And it needed it quickly.

As a company that services 300 airlines, has customers at 140 airports worldwide, handles 1.2 million aircraft movements a year and 1.7 million tons of cargo, bulk delivers 5 million newspapers daily and supplies almost half the UK's retailers, Menzies understands the importance of meeting deadlines. Failure at any point would mean stores have empty shelves, newspapers don't get delivered and planes don't take off on time.

As part of its change management strategy, John Menzies plc is undergoing a 12-month IT transformation programme, under which its IT and networks infrastructure has been outsourced to Sungard Availability Services, its chosen technology partner, and many services transformed into cloud-based solutions. This will allow Menzies to focus on its core business – not only freeing up time, capital and resources, but also giving Menzies the worldwide capabilities, reliability and agility the business demands.

### RESULTS

- Lower IT running costs – 20% headline savings plus efficiency gains
- Introduction of best practice ITIL processes globally
- Greatly enhanced IT availability, flexibility and scalability
- Ability to take advantage of cloud-based solutions
- Move from a Capex to Opex model releases valuable capital
- Agility to capitalise on business opportunities.

### About John Menzies plc

Established in 1833, John Menzies plc is a fast-growing logistics company with a turnover of nearly £2bn and 25,600 employees. Headquartered in Edinburgh, its international operations span the globe. The company has two operating divisions, Menzies Aviation and Menzies Distribution. Both operate in business-to-business sectors where success depends on providing an efficient, high quality, time-critical service to their customers and partners.

Menzies Aviation is a leading global provider of passenger, ramp and cargo services, operating at 140 airports in 31 countries. It handles around 1 million flights and 1.7 million tonnes of cargo each year.

Menzies Distribution provides added value distribution and marketing services to the newspaper and magazine supply chain in the UK. It handles around 5 million newspapers and 2 million magazines (covering some 3,000 titles) each day, with deliveries to about 25,000 customers.

### SERVICES

- **Cloud and Infrastructure Consulting**
- **Platform as a Service (PaaS) – OS/Platform management**
- **Enterprise Cloud Services – resilient, secure managed cloud with SLA-backed uptime of 99.95%**
- **Hybrid IT Management**
- **Cloud-based Recovery** for cloud-enabled systems
- **Disaster Recovery as a Service** for legacy systems.



### THE CHALLENGE: Migrating two data centres in challenging timescales with no disruption to the business

First, Menzies embarked on the procurement process to find a supplier they could rely on. *“We did look at a range of organisations but in reality there were only a small number of companies with the capability to give us what we wanted in terms of technology, the economics and willingness to work with us in the challenging timescale to get to a deal that worked for both of us,”* explains Mark Reid, CIO, John Menzies plc.

*“One of Sungard AS’ strengths is their pragmatic approach. They’re willing to be flexible and compromise. We found there’s the sense of a joint effort – “How are we going to do this?” The relationship gives us the best of both worlds – the infrastructure, scale and experience of a big company but not the inflexibility and rigidity that often comes with it.”*

*“Menzies is a genuinely 24/7 business. For us, it’s not just a few computers data processing overnight but operations all around the world going at full tilt. When everyone is sleeping here in the UK, our teams in Australia and the West Coast of America are still working and the UK distribution business is at its peak. There’s no such thing as a maintenance window.”*

Menzies’ strategy was to consolidate its four existing data centres into two resilient Sungard AS data centres from which Sungard AS would provide a Platform as a Service (PaaS) solution.

However, before the IT transformation process could even start, Menzies and Sungard AS faced a more immediate concern. Menzies’ contract for its Cumbernauld data centre was scheduled to expire in a matter of weeks. This forced the two companies to perform the migration from the existing site to Sungard AS – a ‘lift and shift’ operation due to the time constraints – in just eight weeks.

In fact, the timeframe was so tight that contracts had not been signed before the move date. *“This was a real example of mutual trust before either company had signed on the dotted line,”* recalls Mark Reid, CIO for John Menzies. *“We had to take a leap of faith that Sungard AS would be able to deliver what they promised while Sungard AS allowed us to use their facilities with no guarantee of a contract coming out of it.”*

Ultimately, the migration was executed flawlessly and on time.

But there was to be no breathing space.

No sooner had the first data centre been migrated than a business opportunity presented itself that required the space currently used by Menzies’ Heathrow data centre. Paul Stow, Chief Architect for John Menzies was asked to perform a second successful migration to another Sungard AS data centre within three months, a challenge he likens to *“changing the engine on a 747 mid-Atlantic without anyone noticing.”*



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CIO,  
John Menzies plc



## THE SOLUTION: Total transformation of Menzies' IT infrastructure – at speed!

There were many factors in Menzies' decision to outsource its IT infrastructure to Sungard Availability Services in the ten-year, multi-million pound deal. Steve Rick, Senior Vice President of John Menzies, who is leading the wider transformation explains. *"We selected the Sungard AS solution because it provides us with the flexibility to scale our IT to meet business demand, without requiring capital investment or a commitment to server or storage volumes."*

*"Leveraging their investment in data centres, IT infrastructure and service management provides economies of scale and operation which translates into lower running costs for Menzies' IT infrastructure."*

*Sungard AS was also able to meet specific challenges around the global operation of the Menzies business and existing technology and supplier arrangements."*

Mark Reid concurs, *"Building enterprise-grade data centres is an expensive business and, frankly, why tie up capital on something that is not our core business? We certainly have the capability to do this in-house but, quite simply, it would not be a good use of resources. We need to focus on developing solutions for our business, rather than spend intellectual capital on something that is very interesting for infrastructure engineers but could actually be solved more quickly and cheaply by outsourcing it to Sungard AS."*

To date, staff from Menzies IT Infrastructure team in the UK and US have transferred to the Sungard AS team to support the transition. The next stage is to migrate Menzies' two remaining data centres, in Bracknell and Edinburgh, to the Sungard AS managed cloud by 31 October 2016. This will mean the two companies, working together, will have migrated four data centres and transformed Menzies' IT infrastructure in just 12 months – a feat that would normally take several years!



## BUSINESS BENEFITS: A flexible, scalable IT environment that meets business needs cost-effectively

It is early days in the IT transformation process but Mark Reid expects to reap many benefits. These include increased flexibility from a technology perspective to respond to change by *"turning capacity up and down as the business evolves"* but also from a financial viewpoint. *"At the moment if I initiate a new project and invest in additional servers and terabytes of storage I am committed to it for years. With our cloud model I can just turn it up with business demand and turn it off again when not needed."*

Moving to a consumption-based model will allow Menzies to enjoy all the benefits – scalability, agility and flexibility – a cloud environment brings. Paul Stow notes, *"Sungard AS has enabled us to move from four data centres with all the associated hardware to a model where we simply pay for the services we need. And they're saving us money too!"*

From a test and development point of view, he is looking forward to *"being able to create test environments, use them for a day, a week or as long as they're needed, then turn them off and bring them back when needed."*

With IT being mission-critical to every aspect of its operations, Menzies is enjoying the peace of mind that comes from having SLA-backed uptime of 99.95%.

The challenges Menzies and Sungard AS have met so far give Menzies every confidence for the future. Paul Stow attributes the accelerated pace of the change programme to, *"Sungard AS's ability to stand up the people and technology we need coupled with the business drive from Menzies to deliver it."*

Commenting on the relationship that is developing between Menzies and Sungard AS, Steve Rick remarks, *"I hesitate to use the word 'partnership' as it has become so overused but both the length and depth of our agreement mean that there is a level of commitment there to making the relationship work on both sides. After all, ten years is longer than some marriages!"*





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**Steve Rick,**  
 Senior Vice President,  
 John Menzies plc

#### About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services provides managed IT services, information availability consulting services, business continuity management software, and disaster recovery services. To learn more, visit [www.sungardas.co.uk](http://www.sungardas.co.uk)

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