

Gen-i Drives FleetPartners' Technology Transformation and Roadmap

With a good roadmap, and a trans-Tasman ICT navigator as capable as Gen-i, FleetPartners transforms its business realising increased efficiencies and customer satisfaction.

There's no need to tell a company in the vehicle leasing business about the importance of having a clear roadmap when setting out on a journey.

Melbourne-based FleetPartners knows where technology is taking it as a result of a roadmap developed with Australasian ICT provider, Gen-i.

Since becoming a Gen-i client in early 2007, it's been a smooth trip. And with some distance still to go, FleetPartners is counting on Gen-i to help navigate a complex circuit and finish in pole position.

On the road

FleetPartners, ranked second in New Zealand and fourth in the Australian vehicle leasing market, has a fleet of about 35,000 vehicles across Australia and 20,000 in New Zealand.

The company's technology journey began with the sale of then ANZ Bank-owned FleetPartners (then called Escanda) in late 2006 to a private equity group.

That left the company's Auckland-based head of technology, Stuart Bindon, with no ICT infrastructure or hardware on which to run FleetPartners' key vehicle fleet management application, Leasebase, along with Microsoft SQL Server and Office.

Part of ANZ Bank, Leasebase ran in the Bank's Melbourne data centre. But, once the sale was completed, Bindon had just six months to fully replace the business' ICT infrastructure, re-house its data and find a strategic trans-Tasman partner capable of delivering and managing its full suite of ICT requirements.

"We had a blank sheet of paper," Bindon says, "and a tight time frame in which to find a provider, acquire the necessary hardware and create a trans-Tasman network from scratch.

"We used the first three months to finalise our partner choice and the remaining time to build the new platform."

FleetPartners wanted a single ICT provider across both countries. Gen-i, with branches in Australia's three biggest cities and offices across New Zealand, won the business against Telstra, which was bidding alongside IT provider, KAZ.

To add to the challenge, says FleetPartners strategic development director, Richard Maddox, the company was also relocating its Sydney, Brisbane and Perth offices at the same time, and establishing a new office in Adelaide.

Smooth transition

The changeover went remarkably smoothly. Easter 2007 was three months out from when Gen-i partnered with FleetPartners to set up and cut over to the new ICT infrastructure. This included sourcing, building and installing over 300 desktop computers.

"We all knew it was going to be tight but, together with Gen-i, we were able to deliver what was necessary and meet the deadline," Bindon says.

Easter weekend gave Gen-i a four-day window during which to switch from ANZ's data centre to Gen-i's Auckland-based facility.

ANZ's security compliance requirements meant it wasn't an option to establish a network connection with Gen-i to allow the transfer of FleetPartners' data. So Gen-i physically



transferred about 3.5 terabytes of crucial company records on portable hard disks.

During Easter, FleetPartners was disconnected from the ANZ Bank data centre, the new Gen-i network went live and the Leasebase data was loaded onto Gen-i's servers.

FleetPartners' staff, back from the Easter break, didn't even notice the difference.

"From a user perspective, to be able to turn off my laptop before Easter, go home and return after the break to turn on a new machine and have it work was a pretty amazing result," says Maddox.

"Gen-i's delivery has been exceptional and far exceeded what we had been used to - the support from that point on continues to live up to expectations."

Bright ideas

The full outsourcing arrangement means Gen-i is effectively FleetPartners' ICT department. Bindon says with Gen-i's trans-Tasman reach, there were never any nerves about partnering with them, and he never considered keeping the data centre in-house.

"ICT's not our business. Gen-i is available to us 24/7 on both sides of the Tasman. It invests and maintains that skill set and expertise so we don't have to – and we don't have any of the complications of managing an IT team."

Gen-i has established itself as a solid outsourcing partner, and also as a trusted ICT adviser to FleetPartners, says Bindon.

"When we have a bright idea, we engage Gen-i to see how we can utilise technology to develop that," he says.

One such idea was using the required migration away from the business' legacy vehicle leasing system, Leasebase (which will cease to be supported from 2012) as a catalyst to transform the business' ICT platform and gain otherwise unattainable efficiencies.

"We needed more than just a replication of ANZ Bank's infrastructure, we wanted a platform that genuinely transforms the way we run our business and how we deliver our value proposition to customers," says Bindon.

Adding impetus - and urgency - to the migration, was the expectation that FleetPartners' private equity owners will want to see future evolution of FleetPartners' business model as well as continued growth within the next couple of years. Therefore, the company is looking to bed-in significant performance gains from moving from Leasebase to Oracle Financials and Drive - an Oracle forms-based leasing package.

Big bang

The job of migrating from Leasebase to Oracle and transforming FleetPartners' business is massive.

"Gen-i is involved in the design, build and provision of infrastructure on the Oracle side of things," Bindon says, "and also plays a key role in application testing and migration."

It will be a "big bang" migration, without the luxury of running the old and new systems in parallel to allow any problems to be ironed out.

"We need to get it implemented and be showing the benefits and the uplift in profit from those benefits," Maddox says.

The gains are expected to be considerable, with the bottom-line payback from the project, which has a seven-figure price tag, being delivered inside three years.

"The integration of our customers, our business and our suppliers in a single end-to-end process through a common system will lead to the payback," Maddox says.

"With the new application, the system drives the workflow and so it fundamentally changes the business."



The efficiencies gained will genuinely transform the way FleetPartners delivers value to its customers, Maddox says.

“It will give customers better visibility of where different processes are up to and, in turn, that will lead to much better customer satisfaction.

“We certainly expect our customer service to improve markedly from a basic transactional ability because of the automation.”

FleetPartners is not underestimating the challenge of getting this running smoothly says Maddox.

“With the breadth and depth of Gen-i’s ICT expertise and outsourcing capabilities we’re confident we’ll realise the business benefits for this project.”

With a good roadmap, and a navigator as capable as Gen-i, FleetPartners has little cause to worry about what’s around the next corner.

Product and Services

Telecommunications

- Voice (NZ)
- XT Mobile solutions (NZ)
- Managed Data (trans-Tasman)
- Internet (trans-Tasman)

Technology

- Data Centre Hosting (trans-Tasman)
- ICT Outsourcing including infrastructure and applications (trans-Tasman)
- Service Desk (trans-Tasman)
- Hardware & Software Procurement (trans-Tasman)
- Software Solutions, including testing, development, support & architecture (trans-Tasman)
- Application Support (trans-Tasman)
- Davanti Business Consulting (trans-Tasman)
- Project Management (trans-Tasman)

Business Benefits

- Swift development of new ICT infrastructure
- Seamless transition for end-users
- Increased business efficiency
- Improved customer satisfaction
- 24/7 ICT support
- Long-term ICT roadmap