



Nippon Wealth Life Modernizes Business with Improved IT Strategy



Nippon Wealth Life member of the [Nippon Life Group](#), a financial services provider offering over-the-counter insurance annuity products delivered through financial institutions.

Industry

Financial Services

Partner

Headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, [TIS, Inc.](#) is an information technology company offering business process outsourcing services, consulting and IT platform configuration services.

VMware footprint

Azure VMware Solution

Nippon Wealth Life Insurance Company (Nippon Wealth Life) specializes in over-the-counter sales at financial institutions and offers products and services centered on single-premium fixed annuities in foreign currencies, targeting mainly high-net-worth seniors. To prepare its IT environment to support continuous, stable development, Nippon Wealth Life launched a cloud migration project to improve its existing system and further the company's business imperatives. As a stepping-stone for its future migration to the cloud, Nippon Wealth Life chose Azure VMware Solution.

Existing systems reduce efficiency, raise costs and hinder stable development

Nippon Wealth Life faced several problems with its existing IT systems, including a shortage of server resources and rising operational and maintenance costs. The company struggled with an existing, on-premises system, with constrained resources caused by a rising number of servers, dealing with EOS/EOL for its legacy operating systems and the escalating costs of hardware and software maintenance and operations. Creating an IT environment for continuous, stable development was an urgent task.

“Leveraging IT has become an essential aspect of all modern business, not just in the insurance industry,” says Kazushige Yamamoto, general manager of the Nippon Wealth Life system management department. “One of the key missions of the system management department is to continually provide high-quality, stable IT services that support the company's business. However, as IT systems grew more complex, infrastructure operation costs escalated, which is a major problem.”

“Leveraging IT has become an essential aspect of all modern business, not just in the insurance industry.”

Kazushige Yamamoto, General Manager, Nippon Wealth Life System Management Department



To address these issues, the company began considering migrating its IT environment to the cloud. “IT costs need to be optimized,” Yamamoto explains. “We began investigating the potential of cloud migration as one effective way of addressing these issues.”

Fully managed cloud migration strategy

Nippon Wealth Life considered various cloud migration approaches before ultimately deciding on Azure VMware Solution, a fully managed service that enables the use of virtualized environments. The solution offers significant savings and enables a cloud migration without affecting applications already in use.

Yasumasa Takada, manager of the Nippon Wealth Life system management department, senior infrastructure architect, and member of the IT strategy planning team within the system planning department, managed the project.

“In our company, multiple insurance product development projects are conducted over the course of the year, so it wouldn’t be practical to migrate all existing systems to the cloud simultaneously. That’s why we looked for methods for migrating systems to the cloud without making changes to existing applications. We focused our attention on Azure VMware Solution because it would enable us to use VMware products, which were already in use in our on-premises environment.”

Yasumasa Takada, Manager, System Management Department, Senior Infrastructure Architect, and Member, System Administration Department IT Strategy Planning Team, Nippon Wealth Life

Azure VMware Solution provides a virtualized environment using VMware products on Azure as a service, and also has the advantage of extended support for Windows Server 2008. This solution is the most effective for Nippon Wealth

Life while facing security challenges due to end of legacy OS support. “It’s highly compatible with other Microsoft products and offered major cost benefits over other companies’ clouds,” says Takada. “That’s why Nippon Wealth Life chose this solution.”

Azure VMware Solution supports the use of VMware products in the cloud. One piece of the Nippon Wealth Life IT strategy, outlined in its medium-term management plan, is to further improve IT cost-efficiency. The insurer’s system management department focused on the ability to use cloud solutions to reduce IT costs incurred by its current on-premises environment.

Connecting on-premises to the cloud with zero network delays

Once support was no longer offered for its legacy operating systems, Nippon Wealth Life faced the challenge of ensuring infrastructure security. Azure VMware solution offers the benefits of extended Windows Server 2008 support and the ability to use L2 extension. “Combining Azure VMware Solution and L2 extension enabled us to migrate to the cloud without changing the IP addresses of the servers in our on-premises environment,” says Takada. “This meant that we were able to migrate our systems without affecting existing applications.”

Key points Nippon Wealth Life considered when deploying Azure VMware Solution concerned its network environment and using the L2 extension to connect its on-premises environment to the cloud. “Initially, we considered methods for extending our existing network,” says Takada, “but TIS Inc., a deployment vendor that was part of the project from its evaluation stage, proposed using a leased line to avoid risks. As a result, we didn’t experience any problems such as network delays.”



Starting small, growing into the cloud incrementally

Deploying Azure VMware Solution enabled Nippon Wealth Life to start small and easily expand the system later, with no need to upgrade or apply patches to VMware products. “We started our deployment with three VMware ESXi hosts, and then added two more hosts along the way, but this only took around 30 minutes and didn’t affect our systems,” says Takada. “What’s more, while we had updated the VMware products in our on-premises environment ourselves, this would now be handled by Microsoft, which greatly reduced our operation maintenance burden.”

“In order to be agile and respond to any changes in the environment, we will actively look to leverage the cloud for help. By doing this, we will create an optimized system platform that supports our business strategy, thereby contributing to the growth of our business. Deploying Azure VMware Solution enables us to use Azure services and accelerate the modernization of our applications.”

Kazushige Yamamoto, General Manager, System Management Department, Nippon Wealth Life

Optimizing systems for a cloud native future

Nippon Wealth Life is performing its cloud migration in stages. Roughly 100 Nippon Wealth Life virtual machines—the servers that comprise its operating systems—now run on Azure VMware Solution. Takada says the migration has provided strong results, solving the issues of resource limitations, security measures and cost optimization, goals outlined during the solution evaluation stage.

Though the Nippon Wealth Life cloud migration project is not yet complete, the company plans to continue migrating existing systems to the cloud in the future, including a lift-and-shift to a cloud native environment.

Yamamoto gives Azure VMware Solution high marks, not simply as a way of keeping operating costs down, but as a solution that effectively ensures IT services can be maintained and expanded in the future.