

SXiQ, an IBM Company partners with Bega Cheese to successfully deliver technology migration as part of A\$560m acquisition of Lion Dairy & Drinks

Operating for over 100 years, Bega Cheese Limited (Bega Cheese) is a leading Australian dairy and food company, with an ambition of being The Great Australian Food Company. Bega has manufacturing sites across Australia and has been focussed on bringing great Australian brands back into Australian ownership.

In late 2020 Bega Cheese transformed the Australian food market through their acquisition of Lion's Dairy and Drinks (LD&D) business, expanding their branded foods portfolio, manufacturing and distribution infrastructure.

The acquisition brought together the manufacturing, marketing, sales and distribution of iconic brands such as Big M, Dare, Pura, Dairy Farmers, Farmers Union, Masters, Yoplait, Juice Brothers and Daily Juice.

The acquisition required the technology transition to be completed within a 12-month window. Bega required the acquired Lion Dairy and Drinks applications, data and processes to be transitioned into their existing or expanded infrastructure. Furthermore, the acquisition principles were based on an application and data separation, with core infrastructure remaining with the seller.

For Chief Information Officer of Bega Cheese, Zack Chisholm, this project presented both challenge and opportunity - given the integration was to occur whilst both Bega Cheese and the LD&D business were fully operational and required minimal business disruption. Complexities included replacing remote site hosting infrastructure, transition of core business processes and systems, deploying new cloud infrastructure, and the migration of previously Lion hosted desktop and cloud-based applications to the Bega Cheese network. On the other hand, a number of opportunities presented, and the LD&D business was able to modernise a number of core-platforms.

SXiQ was approached as a key partner to support the migration and integration work for core applications. In addition, this partnership led to the successful infrastructure migration and transition of 31 physical sites performing production, distribution and administration duties, ensuring minimal disruption to the business operations of both the LD&D and the Bega Cheese businesses, within the required completion time of 12-months.

SXiQ, together with the Bega Cheese IT team developed a plan which was underpinned by some core principles to ensure the migrated and integrated systems, performed equal to or better than the state they were in prior to the acquisition, these principles included:

- Minimal business disruption to customers, suppliers and the team
- Cloud-first, avoid building long-term tech-debt
- Move to end-state as quickly as possible, where possible
- Take a phased approach, removing the shock of 'big bang'
- Drive cost-efficiency to help the acquisition case realise synergy benefits

From the moment SXiQ was selected, the clock was ticking with the risks and pressure to deliver were high.

SXiQ partnered with Bega Cheese on end-state design, migration planning and ultimately execution for significant parts the program, with the scope encompassing:

- Migration of mission-critical applications, databases and their associated backups
- Modernisation of numerous applications, delivering improved system performance and security compliance
- Implementation of a prod and non-prod AWS accounts and Landing Zone to house all LD&D workloads, which also included the implementation of a continuous integration and continuous deployment toolset and workflow built on Cloud Formation, Ansible, Jenkins and GitHub
- The migration of remote site systems from 31 physical sites across almost every state and territory in Australia, which included 13 production sites
- Integration of mission critical applications and users into Bega Cheese's core security and identity platforms
- Cloud cost optimisation strategies to ensure intelligent and efficient consumption of cloud resources to support the newly acquired business
- Uplifting the cloud ops team to ensure Bega Cheese IT incorporates true DevSecOps into its core capability supporting this new platform

A project of this scale, complexity and duration required strong governance so both Bega Cheese and SXiQ immediately mobilised a joint Integration Management Office (IMO) with both leadership, architecture and project teams. The IMO and project teams proactively ensured transparent, efficient and closely integrated delivery of the program, amid the fast-moving BAU landscapes. In parallel, delivering timely, meticulously coordinated organisational change and communication ensured the successful wave-by-wave activation of systems. This also meant employees were well supported in an emerging One Bega culture, so team members were aware, prepared and assisted through the changes, resulting in positive experiences.

Fast forward 12 months with the entire scope delivered, we share a proud time to reflect on the success, particularly the minimal disruptions to either the Bega Cheese or LD&D businesses, despite the project running during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The outcome; SXiQ, with Bega Cheese IT brought to life a historically significant technology transition, and in doing so was a key partner supporting the uplift of core applications. This has created a significantly improved position to enable highly automated cloud platforms for the Bega Cheese business which will accelerate innovation cycles, grow a cloud DevSecOps operating model for Bega Cheese IT and deliver rapid results with better outcomes. Simultaneously, this further aligns and enhances the overall Bega Cheese cyber security posture and ongoing cybersecurity capability.

Bega Cheese commented that they selected SXiQ based on its technical capability, strength in cloud and datacentre technology.

SXiQ CEO John Hanna said, "our experts executed deep analysis, strategic thinking, and detailed planning to ensure the successful migration of Lion to Bega Cheese's existing infrastructure."



"By uplifting infrastructure, cloud management tooling and practices, SXiQ has enhanced management of Bega Cheese's cloud assets, improving consistency, security and reducing time to deploy cloud infrastructure in the future."

SXiQ said the project was completed in 12-months delivering meaningful improvements to application performance and systems availability.

For further information please contact

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