

Leveraging the Cloud for **Strategic and Practical Resource Utilization**



SNAPSHOT

Kolcraft[®]

Industry: Manufacturing

Business: Baby products

Focus: Backup, Disaster Recovery, ERP

Challenges

- Protect patents
- Secure data
- Needed a solution capable of an ERP upgrade

OVERVIEW

Using technology to create innovative products, Kolcraft wanted to continue moving forward by reducing their data footprint. This allows for more physical space and bigger storage capacity where future ideas and designs can be created and stored.

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF INNOVATION

As a third generation family-owned and operated business, Kolcraft understands the power of innovation. Since its inception in 1946, Kolcraft has specialized in the creation of high quality baby products. Kolcraft's partnerships with leading industry providers has enabled them to manufacture some of the top-selling, most award winning products in the market.

Kolcraft has long remained a number one choice of parents, due to the introduction of ground breaking products, such as the Carri-Cradle, the first all-plastic combination of carrier and rocker. With 70 years of experience in baby product manufacturing, Kolcraft remains focused on how to most effectively embrace new technologies and utilize its resources. These strategic insights and practices are what have given Kolcraft a leading edge in a highly competitive market.

As a pioneer within their industry, Kolcraft wanted to evolve their company, look towards the future, and be prepared. They turned to longtime partner Meridian to help with this endeavor. We have been in-house with Kolcraft for nearly a decade, providing guidance and assistance on the technologies that would best fit within their organization.

THE FOREFRONT OF EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Kolcraft's way of embracing new technologies lead to large amounts of hardware and software solutions within their environment. Using these solutions have enabled staff to continue to be more versatile and adds value to their business. However, the many different product designs and patents meant ensuring that critical data and information would remain accessible even in the event of a disaster.

Another challenge the company faced was the desire to upgrade their ERP solution.

1. Protecting their patents

Kolcraft was trying to maintain an offsite hosted environment for its data backup and disaster recovery operations. While this environment provided the function needed, they found it both cumbersome and costly, due to the facility not having a local staff member that could monitor it.

“We were maintaining our own offsite hosted environment. And although it worked well, it was very cumbersome and very costly to maintain that facility.”

Gary Klosak

Director of Information Technology, Kolcraft

2. Securing Data

Along with the challenge of its offsite environment, Kolcraft needed to ensure that its data would be securely backed up. Kolcraft needed a disaster recovery solution that would keep the business up and running in the event of an unexpected outage or data disaster.

3. Available solution capable of an ERP upgrade

Kolcraft's systems were not capable of handling another ERP upgrade. Their IT professionals needed a platform in which they could test the upgraded solution, however they would only need the environment for a short time. Kolcraft would need to purchase additional equipment to do this, requiring costly overhead.

ENHANCING AGILITY WITH MERIDIAN IT

Regulations within the infant industry require companies to quickly diagnose and report any issues that would necessitate a recall. These requirements mean that Kolcraft must have immediate access to critical data and product information available at all times. For Kolcraft, ensuring the safety of their products and the families who use them is a top priority.

Meridian IT understands the goals of organizations looking to become more agile, while enhancing customer relationships, and improving the workplace. Our world class professional experts are fluent in modern IT. We help our clients translate unique options to fit their business goals.

We understand that IT managers and administrators are the technical leaders within companies today. They managing day to day operations to ensure applications, systems, software, and hardware are all

running smoothly. But even technical leaders need help in determining where certain technologies, such as the cloud, might fit within their infrastructure. We know that implementing new technologies can be a frustrating and time consuming process.

Our experts are able to help our clients:

- Accelerate the process to ensure a smooth transition;
- Consider any potential issues;
- Discuss IT solutions that align with business initiatives;
- Create an incredible experience.

By working with Kolcraft, we were able to implement an innovative technology that acts as a practical means to meet their challenges. We suggested cloud technology. While some executives have been given the impression that cloud can solve any technical challenge, it must be correctly assessed to be an effective tool within your business. As we worked closely with Kolcraft, we discussed how the cloud could be one more thing within the IT department’s toolkit and what it could deliver for their business.

DETERMINING THE CASE FOR CLOUD

To address Kolcraft’s needs, in-house consultant Mike Riva of Meridian sat down with the IT department and discussed the possibility of using cloud technology. Together, they determined if the cloud was something that would fit within their requirements and infrastructure. They determined whether it would provide solutions to their backup and recovery challenges and ERP upgrade.

Backup as a Service

Kolcraft is now able to send their data to our Data Vault premises through the cloud, allowing for secure transmission and ready use for employees. We confirm that all data backups are validated, and meet regulations for data protection.

Disaster Recovery as a Service

Provided Kolcraft an established stand-by system so that data is ready and can be turned on in the case of a disastrous event. This allows Kolcraft to continue day to day operations without having to worry about long term interruptions.

“Mike Riva and Meridian have shown us, through many different examples and many different types of presentations, how we can cut our costs, improve our efficiency, and have a more solid solution through their services in Kenosha. It’s been working fabulously ever since.”

Gary Klosak

Director of Information Technology, Kolcraft

Infrastructure as a Service

Provided a sandbox test environment, giving Kolcraft the computing power and space to test out their ERP without the need to purchase additional equipment. Kolcraft can easily turn off this sandbox platform when they decide they no longer need it.

These solutions were Kolcraft’s first major investment in cloud technology. With Mike’s help, Meridian was able to show Kolcraft how it could cut costs, improve efficiency, and have a more solid solution. After determining how and where cloud technology would fit within their current infrastructure, we showed Kolcraft the practicality that the cloud delivers.

IS CLOUD A GOOD FIT FOR YOU?

The best way to answer this question is by first defining what your organization and IT operation objectives are, and understanding those strategic initiatives.

What are your core and practical objectives for your IT operations?

This may seem like a simple question with an obvious answer, however some companies answer this question by going all in with cloud technology, while others avoid the cloud completely.

By working with Meridian, Kolcraft was able to become more agile, take control of their environments, and cut costs by implementing a cloud technology strategy. We made moving some of their services to the cloud an easy process, guiding and advising on the best places the cloud could support their infrastructure. As such, Kolcraft was soon able to reduce their data centers by 75%, going from 50 servers down to just 3 thanks to utilizing virtualization. The company is looking forward to moving these 3 centers to the cloud as well in the future.

In this example, a cloud assessment was able to show where Kolcraft could employ a strategic use of resources within their IT operations and provided numerous benefits throughout the organization.

Meridian helps to ease our clients' first steps into the cloud, by creating flexible and extremely high touch approaches. We don't believe in replacing everything with cloud; instead we integrate and leverage cloud technology into a business' current investment if needed.

About Meridian IT

Meridian IT is a member of Meridian Group International, operating worldwide. Focusing on our core competencies: cloud services, data center, security and risk management, and unified workspace, we provide flexible IT solutions with leading vendors, managed services, deployment options, ongoing maintenance and global support. As part of a group that offers equipment leasing, clients leverage our comprehensive portfolio, capabilities, and industry insights to support their business initiatives and growth. [Learn more at www.meridianitinc.com](http://www.meridianitinc.com) or www.onlinemeridian.com.

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“Cloud adoption is exploding but all roads do not lead to the cloud. Meridian IT helps our clients determine which application, workloads, and platforms are best suited for the cloud.”

Tom Horan

Sr. Director, Cloud Business Leader, Meridian IT

Meridian will demystify the cloud by helping IT personnel understand and explore the benefits the solutions can help your company realize. If your organization is looking for a layer of protection that you didn't have before, contact us to discover how cloud solutions can fit into your existing infrastructure.