

Cybersecurity Company Acquires Business, Migrates Legacy Apps to AWS in Under 2 Months



Executive Summary

Coalfire is a Colorado-based cybersecurity company that provides a wide range of services, including cloud security support, threat and vulnerability management, and compliance assessments. Today, Coalfire works with over 1,300 clients across many industries, from healthcare to retail. The company is growing quickly and continues to build on a long history of success going back to 2001.

In June 2021, Coalfire acquired a smaller business that relied on physical servers to host a number of applications. Coalfire wanted to migrate these assets to the cloud. ClearScale, as an Amazon Web Services (AWS) Premier Tier Services Partner with the AWS Migration competency, stepped in to ensure a smooth, quick migration.



The Challenge

Previously, the business that Coalfire acquired was maintaining 12 physical servers at its office space. Coalfire needed to move these on-premises assets to an existing AWS environment. The servers were simply too old to maintain.

However, two challenges were preventing Coalfire from completing a cloud migration:

1. The acquired business had limited documentation on the target applications
2. Coalfire also had little capacity to execute the migration internally

Part of the documentation issue was related to the fact that the acquired business was small and busy. Like many small companies, that team focused its energy on building great products and didn't have much capacity to establish consistent IT processes or documentation practices. This made it hard for Coalfire to gather information about different applications. Various people held critical tribal knowledge, and none of them had much time to give outside of their main responsibilities.

On Coalfire's side, the Director of Infrastructure and Operations only had four resources available – a DevOps engineer, a systems engineer, a systems administrator, and a network administrator. These individuals didn't have time to chase down information to prepare for an AWS migration.

Additionally, the migration had to happen quickly. Coalfire was planning to reconstruct the acquired company's network to bring it up to the parent company's standards. Making everything more complex was the fact that Coalfire wasn't sure how many applications were on the on-premises servers. Given these challenges, Coalfire decided to hire a third-party cloud expert to knock out the migration. ClearScale fit the need perfectly.

"ClearScale made it very easy for us. The PM was wonderful. He was timely in his communication. If I needed anything or if I needed to provide him with information, he was always available. We trusted ClearScale, and their team proved our trust was never misplaced."

Jackie Kramers, Director of Infrastructure and Operations, Coalfire

The ClearScale Solution

ClearScale's project lead hosted a kickoff meeting and gathered a list of assets that needed to be migrated to the cloud. Initially, Coalfire thought the migration would involve moving close to 40 applications to AWS. After taking a full inventory, Coalfire learned only 3 applications and 6 servers had to come over with ClearScale's help.

ClearScale conducted a thorough review of the legacy servers and came up with a plan to ensure those servers were replicated correctly in AWS. As a part of this work, ClearScale served as the intermediary between the acquired business and Coalfire, making sure everyone's goals would be met as a result of the project.

After completing the migration, all servers were stable, and Coalfire gained the knowledge it needed to maintain everything successfully. The acquired business also no longer must worry about keeping legacy servers running on-premises. Overall, the cloud migration only took less than two months after a long nine-month period of worrying about how it would all get done correctly.

The Benefits

Thanks to ClearScale's efforts, Coalfire was able to accomplish its vision of getting the newly acquired business up and running on AWS. Coalfire had deep trust in ClearScale's expertise and process, enabling executives to focus their efforts on other matters. Plus, the Director of Infrastructure and Operations was able to move forward with reconstructing the acquired company's network. And the in-house DevOps engineer learned a lot about the new company's applications and cloud migrations in general.

Furthermore, Coalfire can begin capitalizing on the benefits of having this new business unit on the cloud and up to speed with the parent company's standards. At a time when companies are settling into remote, cloud-based work, Coalfire has what it needs to continue delivering robust cybersecurity services to customers.