

# Around the world, Google tools power retailer's growth.

## Client

Global retailer

## Industry

Retail

## Technologies

- Google Cloud
- Google Big Query
- Google Workspace
- Google Chromebooks

## Business Need

Transition from an over-reliance on internal staff and on-premise systems to better support a global workforce, work more efficiently and maintain market leadership.

## Solution

Pythian implemented Google Workspace to boost team collaboration, implemented three core platforms for scalable growth, migrated from on-prem to Google Cloud, and strategically redeployed internal resources.

## Result

Faster development cycles and scalable solutions have dramatically reduced IT costs, accelerated speed to market, improved collaboration across the company's global workforce and created a strong partnership with Pythian to continually leverage Google solutions to meet their business needs.

## Strong relationships and smart tech decisions pay off for global apparel brand

Great apparel retailers typically become household names for their flagship brands. Less well known (but no less impressive) are their technology skills.

Pythian teamed up with one global retailer making a name for themselves as a top Android developer and industry innovator. To foster these capabilities, the company employs multiple Google solutions across its global workforce, and leverages the talents of experts like Pythian.

A quick rewind shows the extent of the company's digital journey. Just seven years ago:

- The retailer relied almost exclusively on on-premises hardware.
- They worked with numerous vendors, resulting in a collection of point solutions, rather than a seamless, scalable infrastructure.
- The global IT team managed nearly all tasks in-house, stretching their resources and expertise.
- The company's 10,000 employees, from designers and developers to store managers and senior leaders, were limited in their communication and collaboration options.

Fast forward to 2021. The global retailer has reinvented itself, thanks to forward-thinking IT leadership, strong relationships with key partners and smart decisions about tech platforms and projects.

Today:

- A cohesive tech strategy maximizes three core platforms, including Google.
- A lean and focused IT team accomplishes more—with fewer people—thanks to smart outsourcing decisions and more productive applications.
- A cloud-centric approach provides robust computing muscle with far less cost or maintenance.
- Flexible and intuitive apps keep their global workforce connected on multiple levels to communicate and work efficiently.

### **Challenges: An over-reliance on internal staff and on-prem systems**

The retailer needed the right IT resources and tools to:

- **Support a global workforce.** With more than 350 locations and 10,000 employees worldwide, the retailer needed solutions that made working together more convenient and intuitive.
- **Work efficiently.** As the company grew, disparate tools and an over-reliance on in-house staff made it difficult to scale effectively or react quickly.
- **Maintain market leadership.** In retail, being competitive means getting to market fast with the latest offerings. Hardware-driven, on-prem solutions were beginning to hold back the company's capabilities.

The retailer maintains a nimble and creative culture. A large percentage of employees work as designers, brand managers, developers and creative professionals. They're young, hip and digitally fluent.

That demographic match made Google solutions and Pythian resources a good fit as the company embarked on a sizable evolution of its IT infrastructure. Having trusted guidance and expert partners enabled IT leadership to move forward with confidence.

Their transformation began in 2014, when the company needed to renew its Microsoft Office licenses. An internal audit showed they were making a significant investment in software that was not well used.

A proof of concept (PoC) with Google Workspace revealed a better way. Within 24 hours, the pilot was operational. In less than 100 days and at a fraction of the cost of their previous tool, the retailer was able to go live across their entire footprint with Google Workspace.

Adoption rates with Google Workspace are striking:

- 99 percent of employees use Google Meet every day (even before the pandemic).
- Nearly 70 percent use Sheets.
- Thanks to their intuitive features, Gmail, Docs, Calendar and other apps have similar strong usage rates.

The company recently added Google Chromebooks at its retail stores to further connect its workforce.

## Solutions: A pivot to trusted partners and flexible platforms

Their digital transformation included:

- **Deploying Google Workspace worldwide.** The retailer replaced Microsoft Exchange and Office with the user-friendly apps in Google Workspace, which saved money, boosted team collaboration and significantly reduced the IT workload.
- **Establishing strong foundations.** The retailer pivoted its approach from numerous point solutions to three core platforms, including Google, which provide a flexible, scalable foundation for future growth.
- **Moving from on-prem to cloud.** Google Cloud now enables the company to practice continuous innovation within its global DevOps teams. AI tools like BigQuery make powerful analyses fast and cost-effective, resulting in never before seen insights for senior leaders.
- **Redeploying their resources.** A shift to outsourcing with trusted partners like Pythian helps internal staff move from reactive to strategic.

Next, IT leadership turned their attention to their in-house resources and vendor relationships. Like many rapidly growing organizations, they had solved day-to-day challenges one at a time, adding platforms, hardware and vendors along the way. The result was numerous point solutions, a collection of on-prem hardware around the globe and an IT staff stretched thin trying to maintain everything. It was time to rethink their approach.

With their pivot to Google solutions, the retailer chose key external partners with deep subject matter expertise. Working with Pythian and

Google helped the company streamline its workload and focus internal resources on the right activities.

Pythian serves as an extension of the internal team, providing technical expertise, hands-on development and strategic insights. It's a relationship built on open communication, partnership and trust.

A key project that leveraged Pythian's strengths was the retailer's move from on-prem to Google Cloud, which now supports their global development team, the retailer's complex device management requirements and its development work for external partners.

The retailer relies on an in-house development team located overseas. Previously, they struggled with the limitations of on-prem hardware, from limited computing power to lack of redundancy and connectivity in the region.

Pythian worked with the retailer to ensure a smooth transition, including establishing the right governance protocols and infrastructure to make cloud development successful. Today, the retailer deploys infrastructure as code and leverages the scalable capacity of Google Cloud to speed its release cycles. Thanks to a continuous innovation framework, developers no longer have to wait to upload code; with Google Cloud, they're able to collaborate in real-time on source code and iterate much more rapidly.

## Moving forward with faster dev cycles and scalable solutions

Stakeholders and end users now benefit from:

- **Dramatically reduced IT costs.** From Workspace to Cloud, numerous Google solutions provide the retailer with powerful capabilities, while simultaneously decreasing their IT spend, compared to previous solutions. Much of their recent DevOps and BigQuery work was simply cost-prohibitive with on-prem solutions.
- **Accelerated speed to market.** Thanks to scalable cloud servers and continuous innovation initiatives, designers, developers and external clients can work at the speed of business and maintain their competitive edge.
- **Improved collaboration.** Chromebooks and Google Workspace applications keep the company's global workforce connected, fueling efficient communications and workflow.
- **Strong partnerships.** Pythian functions as an extension of the IT team, providing valuable guidance on new ways to leverage Google solutions to achieve their goals.

Today, the global retailer's smart IT decisions let the organization work in ways barely imaginable just a few years ago.

- Developers and designers accelerate their projects and work at the speed of business—rather than the speed of their servers.
- Staff across 37 countries stay connected and productive.
- Costs are down—while capabilities are up.

For example, the retailer recently leveraged Google Cloud and BigQuery to obtain gross margin data across its sales channels. The project required complex analysis of product sales data in direct, wholesale, concession and consignment channels. Using on-prem hardware was cost-prohibitive, but with cloud options and Pythian's guidance, they could deploy for a fraction of the cost.

Best of all, the IT team can work nimbly and strategically, thanks to the right platforms and external resources. With its emphasis on honest, authentic communications and responsive service, the Pythian relationship fits the retailer's culture well. Both sides look forward to a long-term and productive future.



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## ABOUT PYTHIAN

Founded in 1997, Pythian is a global IT services company that helps organizations transform how they compete and win by helping them turn data into valuable insights, predictions and products. From cloud automation to machine learning, Pythian designs, implements and supports customized solutions to the toughest data challenges.

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