PACKING FOR THE MOVE:

ATTOM's Quest to Consolidate & Migrate Data From Colo to Azure

The Client:

ATTOM Data Solutions is the curator of ATTOM, a multi-sourced national property data warehouse that contains tax, deed, mortgage, foreclosure, environmental risk, natural hazard, health hazard, neighborhood characteristic and property characteristic data for over 155 million U.S. properties, delivering actionable data to clients and powering consumer websites owned by ATTOM Data Solutions: RealtyTrac.com, Homefacts.com, and HomeDisclosure.com. ATTOM data is cited by thousands of media outlets each month, including frequent mentions on CBS Evening News, The Today Show, CNBC, CNN, FOX News, PBS NewsHour and in The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and USA TODAY.

Todd Teta and Richard Sawicky are the Chief Technology Officer and Chief Data Officer respectively.

Fast Facts:

- **Migrate 50 TB of Data**
- **On Legacy SQL Server Databases**
- **45 Day Window for Migration**
- **30% Cost Savings on Infrastructure**
- **Now 100% Consolidated in Azure**

The Challenge:

Acquisitions require consolidating data, and when you're a data company like ATTOM Data, that usually means moving A LOT of data. In ATTOM's case, this involved consolidating and moving a full 50 Terabytes to Azure to save money and enjoy greater scalability, while unifying their software.

Sawicky describes the situation, "The project included consolidation, migration, conversion to SSIS catalogued project model as well as sizing and choosing the correct VM for the Azure environment. We were wrestling with:

- Legacy SQL Server installations hosting smaller databases (SQL 2005, 2008 & 2012)
- Moving out of our co-location center
- Moving big databases out of a hosting facility onto new VM in Azure.

Teta summarizes, "Overall, we were looking to consolidate from 10 smaller different old servers into basically three VMs running SQL Server 2017 and 2014."

ATTOM's expiring contract with a colocation facility added another level of complexity to the challenge. Sawicky explains, "We didn't want to sign another multi-year contract. There was about a 45-day parallel run state with our on-premise environment. It was a 'cannot fail' event."

The Solution:

Having worked with DCAC on a daring upgrade to SQL Server 2016 while it was still in beta years ago, ATTOM knew exactly who they would hire. Teta commented, "We put Denny and the team in the budget from Day One." Sawicky agrees, "It is that comfort level: you can trust them."

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Denny Cherry and Joey D'Antoni worked with the Attom team in designing the plan. The migration would be done in two phases: the customer-facing components first, the backoffice second. But first came the sizing. Joey's original spec was the GS5 but Richard and Todd were attracted to the M Series, which offered a TB of RAM. Todd admits, "During diagnostic testing we saw clearly that the GS5 was the choice to support the workload. Joey called it from the beginning."

Even the best laid plans usually experience unforeseen challenges. The trick is having a great consultant that can troubleshoot. In ATTOM's case, the source servers had 1Gb network cards, ultimately limiting the amount of data it was possible to move at one time and the clock was ticking. Joey proposed consolidating some servers for cost purposes and log shipping for the migration, at which point, the transition happened cleanly.

The Results:

Teta's favorite aspects of the new environment are the performance and budget savings. "Our response times have improved and thanks to the work on automation around monitoring, performance is great. Cost-wise, we reduced our infrastructure spending by more than a 30%."

For Sawicky, the new environment means better service and scalability. "Our colocation facility service was declining rapidly as they were steering away from being a host provider. We also have the flexibility and the ability the scale and expand to consolidate all of our operations and be flexible as we take on new projects, new datasets, and also to better our serve customers on a modern platform capable of enrolling a lot of the Azure functionality for our customers a little easier."

Sawicky admits, "There was a ton of moving parts in it and Joey and Denny, they were the quarterback through it all. There is no way that we would be sitting here 100% in Azure without those guys."