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Case study



Sector Manufacturing
Service Mergers & Acquisitions

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Transition planning and execution for a complex carve-out

Commercial ceilings specialist, Armstrong Ceiling Solutions (Zentia), worked with Waterstons to navigate the complex post-acquisition world of architecture, implementation, migration and programme management.



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Results at a glance

- Raising quality and lowering costs
- Acquiring and retaining customers
- Providing timely and accurate information
- Reducing risk and increasing security

When a business is acquired from Group ownership, there's always plenty of technology concerns to be managed. From the simple-sounding migration of users to new email addresses to the implementation of complex enterprise-grade infrastructure solutions, challenges and interdependencies abound. So when Armstrong Ceiling Solutions (Zentia) was acquired by a private equity purchaser, they turned to Waterstons to help them steer a path through the pitfalls.

Armstrong Ceiling Solutions (Zentia), a leading manufacturer of commercial ceiling systems across 11 markets in Europe, selected Waterstons as their strategic partner to support their complex carve-out process; with a technology separation from Armstrong World Industries, a US business, and an entity separation from the German business, Knauf. The UK business was acquired following private equity investment by Aurelius Equity Opportunities.

Waterstons worked with the in-house team to agree the detailed scope of the technical separation and to navigate the complex carve-out. This required close collaboration with various third parties to negotiate and deliver the technical transition, which was achieved well within the timescales required.

The priority was to review existing business systems, in order to drive the future IT infrastructure state. This considered the benefits of cloud systems versus more traditional infrastructure, along with security and financial constraints. Detailed workshops were held with Armstrong (Zentia) World Industries in order to agree a clear transition plan; from which various activities were then undertaken by Waterstons:

- Technical architecture for the 'future state' and transition
- Management of a detailed project plan for all technical separation effort
- Setup and configuration of a new pan-European Wide Area Network (WAN)
- Interim 'Infrastructure as a Service' (IaaS) platform to support aggressive project timescales, with subsequent migration to a dedicated hybrid cloud infrastructure
- Migration of 200 users, business data, and e-mail with minimal impact on Business as Usual activities
- A new Microsoft Teams phone system to support an office move and replace various legacy systems
- Application cutover support, providing a framework for additional system migrations along with comprehensive infrastructure support
- Seamless transfer of control for existing networks, including for production facilities

The UK business is now fully standalone with a 'right-sized' technology platform for future improvements and growth in line with the ambitions of the new owners, Aurelius. As the project neared completion, COVID-19 forced the business into lockdown, but fortuitous timing of the implementation work meant that the new platforms put in place ensured the business was able to continue operating with key staff as required without issue.

> **"Waterstons were the perfect partner to deliver on this detailed and complex programme of work. They clearly understood the challenges and were able to provide both breadth and depth of experience to rise to meet them."**
>
> Philip Dixon
> IT Systems Manager



Through partnership working, and with new systems and technology in place, Armstrong Ceiling Solutions (Zentia) have been positioned to support growth and success as the world enters its 'new normal'. Get in touch to find out more about working with Waterstons, or learn how partnership can be the key to success.