



## Customer Case Study – Logistics

# Modernising Aramex for greater agility and innovation

Rackspace Technology supported in Aramex's migration away from on-premise, legacy solutions towards a cloud native model that would deliver the agility needed in an increasingly disrupted market.

## Our customer

Aramex is a leading global provider of comprehensive logistics and transportation solutions, based in the United Arab Emirates. Its asset-light business model, underpinned by innovative technology, has been critical in enabling Aramex to adapt swiftly in challenging market conditions and as customer preferences have evolved over the past four decades.

## The obstacles they faced

Facing increasing market disruption from new players that were using cloud native technologies to be more agile, Aramex recognised that it would need to undergo a significant digital transformation project underpinned by the cloud to support its continued growth, and cement its future as a market leader in customer experience and last-mile delivery.

## How we helped

Aramex chose AWS as its preferred cloud platform and, following recommendations from the cloud vendor, the company embarked on a strategic partnership with Rackspace Technology to migrate its infrastructure to the public cloud. The scope of the project was then expanded to support in the modernisation of Aramex's application portfolio, with the teams working collaboratively to design reusable application architecture that would enable Aramex to build cloud native applications in the future.

## What we achieved together

Since embarking on its journey to becoming cloud native, the reduction in the on-premise environment has meant that Aramex has already seen savings when scaling. This was key during the COVID-19 pandemic, where Aramex saw 30-40% growth in E-commerce volumes which its technology landscape was able to support. The cloud is already delivering on its promise as a vehicle for innovation and Rackspace Technology continues to act as a strategic partner in helping the company realise the opportunities of its cloud native future.







*“The potential of the cloud went from being a discussion in the IT office to a strategic boardroom decision. We recognised that our ability to sustain our competition edge depended on our ability to modernise our core environment and transform our technology landscape to become more agile and support future innovation using the best available technologies.”*

**Mohammed Sleetq**  
Chief Digital Officer, Aramex

## Rackspace Technology helps Aramex build the foundations for a cloud-native future

Aramex is a leading global provider of comprehensive logistics and transportation solutions, with a breadth of services that include express courier delivery, freight forwarding, logistics, supply chain management, ecommerce and record management services. Over the past four decades, the Dubai-headquartered firm has achieved its competitive advantage through continuous development in innovation technology that has delivered a superior

customer experience at every touchpoint as shipments are sent, tracked and delivered.

“Aramex has always been perceived as an innovator in the region and an agile operator, able to manage the constant change and address the rapid pace of market demands and customer requirements. Over the years, we’ve seen the industry go through significant change — primarily driven by the growth of ecommerce, and while we continue to compete with the traditional operators, we found ourselves competing with a new breed of digital operators that are cloud native,” commented Mohammed Sleetq, Chief Digital Officer at Aramex.

“For years, we had almost religious practices for innovation and self-development, which

helped us stay at the top of our game,” Mais Rihani, CTO at Aramex added. “We were building more and more, but it was all on premise. When these new cloud-based competitors entered the market, we realised that our environment — with its interdependencies and legacy core products — prevented us from being as responsive to changing consumer trends. “We were conscious of the need to modernise our core landscape to strengthen our position as an agile operator and a tech enabler in the region.

The logistics and transportation provider embarked upon a large enterprise digital transformation program with the goal of migrating its entire technology infrastructure

from its on-premise data centres to Amazon Web Services (AWS) in order to increase agility, security and speed of innovation. The program includes transformation in other areas including customer experience and last mile innovation. Aramex was previously linked to seven data centres across the globe, which supported over 60 on-premise applications. To support Aramex in moving its core IT backbone to AWS and in the transformation of its IT landscape through application modernisation, AWS recommended Rackspace Technology as a strategic partner to help the company accelerate the transformation and help it develop the design processes that would support future transformation.



“We embrace diversity at Aramex — and it’s one of our key differentiators in the market. As we embarked on this next step in our technological transformation, we wanted to bring in different expertise and experience beyond that of our internal team through working with a technology partner. Rackspace Technology has a clear track record of success, with great references in the Middle East and beyond. There was also a natural chemistry between the teams when we brought them together, which is ultimately what made us confident that Rackspace Technology was the right strategic partner for this ambitious program,” said Rihani.

## Transforming Aramex’s technology landscape

After a company reorganization in 2007, the first stage of the project was to complete Migration Readiness Planning (MRP), which built on the Migration Readiness Assessment that AWS had initially conducted on Aramex’s infrastructure. As part of the MRP, Rackspace Technology aligned with AWS methodology to complete a detailed analysis of the current estate to help establish the strategy, timeframe and roadmap for the migration.

Working closely with the team at AWS, Rackspace Technology then built a team of experts across its Professional Services function that would work directly with the Aramex IT and application development teams to deliver against this roadmap. The strength of the relationships developed was not only important for ensuring that we worked as one team throughout the cloud migration. We established a level of trust that empowered Rackspace Technology to challenge our assumptions - particularly where we found ourselves holding onto certain technologies.”

Of the seven data centers that Aramex was previously linked to, five have now been decommissioned. Rackspace Technology

*“We have a team of technical experts who have created innovative technology that put Aramex at the forefront of our industry for many years. However, we knew that we were embarking on a colossal shift of our IT environment. The collaboration between our internal team and that of AWS and Rackspace Technology was critical to the success of this transformation.”*

Mohammed Sleaf  
Chief Digital Officer, Aramex



supported in creating the IT backbone of the cloud environment that would ensure that it acted as an extension to the existing environment, where applications could interact seamlessly.

Aramex also wanted to ensure that the cloud applications were native to the cloud environment and not merely using an SQL server to “lift and shift” legacy products into the AWS platform. In the next stage of the project, Rackspace Technology will be working closely with Aramex on the modernisation of the company’s extensive application portfolio, including many Microsoft .Net applications. The architecture of the first primary application to be rewritten — Transport — is particularly complex and critical in nature, due to the many different applications feeding into it. Working together, Aramex and Rackspace Technology are developing a new cloud-based architecture that will be reusable across its 60+ applications, while also ensuring that the wider portfolio of applications could continue interacting with the new cloud-based solution as if it were the original, on-premise application.

## Developing remote working practices to continue the seamless project delivery

Aramex and Rackspace Technology were about eight weeks into the project when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the teams to continue the work remotely. While there were some initial concerns about the practicalities of operating in this way, Aramex and Rackspace Technology were able to successfully redistribute the workload, and change the governance and product plan in light with the current requirements.

Rackspace Technology continued to hold workshops remotely with AWS and stakeholders across Aramex — from

departmental heads, to architects and developers — which not only enabled the project to progress according to plan, but supported the overarching objectives for the cloud transformation to catalyse business change.

“The loyalty and commitment that we’ve seen on the programme from the team at Aramex and Rackspace Technology during this trying period has shown how aligned our two companies’ values are. I can’t think of a time when our leadership values were more evident than over the past few months – and this was also true of Rackspace Technology,” said Rihani.

Looking forward, Sleeq is confident in the ability of his team to work remotely with Rackspace Technology and AWS to deliver complex projects as one team. Indeed, he commented that the transition towards remote working due to COVID-19 had proved to be “a good rehearsal for us when we go to implementation and I’m more confident based on the experience of the past eight weeks.”

## Creating a cloud native future that is more flexible, robust and agile

Thanks to the team’s strategic vision for the potential of the cloud and technology within the organisation, Aramex is not only undergoing cloud transformation but true business change. The ultimate goal of this transition is to modernise the company’s technology to make it more flexible, robust and agile to adapt in the rapidly evolving competitive climate.

“Few people are as ambitious – if not a little reckless – as Sleeq and I were to embark on such a project. We had multiple programmes all running in parallel: modernising not only the technology itself, but also transforming

the way in which we approach technology as a business,” commented Rihani.

Aramex is already seeing the results of its investment in the cloud. The scalability of the cloud infrastructure was critical in supporting customers throughout the 30-40% growth rates that Aramex experienced during the pandemic. The reduction of the on-premise environment resulted in cost savings, as the company has transitioned away from the seven data centres that it previously managed. While the project is still ongoing, moving away from the monolithic design of the legacy environment into a cloud-based, microservices environment is already starting to deliver against the goal to adopt a more agile infrastructure. Both back office products have now been modernised and sliced into different productivity stacks.

The is enabling the Aramex team to begin exploring how cloud-based machine learning models could advance its logistics and transport processes on the ground. “In our data lake, we now have around 10.2TB of data powering five to six machine learning use cases on the cloud,” Rihani explained. “This generates over 450,000 predictions per day — each of which is generated in just 1.1125 milliseconds. With more than 100,000 shipments every day, the deployment of microservices in these machine learning models will help automate more processes to drive greater efficiencies that help us optimise performance and cost.”

“The growth and success that Aramex has known over the past four decades has been down to constant dedication to its customers — and understanding the important role that technological innovation plays in ensuring that we are always able to deliver against their changing expectations,” concluded Sleeq. “I am confident that with our new agile cloud infrastructure, we will be able to further align our innovative culture to customer demand to help retain our position as the preferred partner in our core markets.”

## About Rackspace Technology

Rackspace Technology is the multicloud solutions expert. We combine our expertise with the world’s leading technologies — across applications, data and security — to deliver end-to-end solutions. We have a proven record of advising customers based on their business challenges, designing solutions that scale, building and managing those solutions, and optimizing returns into the future.

As a global, multicloud technology services pioneer, we deliver innovative capabilities of the cloud to help customers build new revenue streams, increase efficiency and create incredible experiences. Named a best place to work, year after year according to Fortune, Forbes, and Glassdoor, we attract and develop world-class talent to deliver the best expertise to our customers. Everything we do is wrapped in our obsession with our customers’ success — our Fanatical Experience™ — so they can work faster, smarter and stay ahead of what’s next.

Learn more at [www.rackspace.com](http://www.rackspace.com)

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