

## CASE STUDY

## The art of balancing re-platforming and re-engineering IT systems

Having evolved over 20 years, Areen Design Group's bespoke interior design and procurement management service was sophisticated but technical maintenance and support were becoming increasingly challenging.

As a global firm with high-profile clients, Areen Design needed a plan that provided a stable and reliable platform for the next two to three years while a next generation solution was planned and delivered.

The firm asked Triad to prepare an independent short and long-term plan for this core business application. Completed over twenty days, the Triad team produced an in-depth Triad Pathfinder review that evaluated the entire application landscape and determined the optimal combination of tasks to achieve this goal.

## About the client

The Areen Design Group consists of three companies specialising in interior design, architecture and procurement services. Areen Design have projects throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Their portfolio of work includes airports, hotels, healthcare facilities, universities and luxury private residences. They pride themselves on quality and delivering on time and to budget.

With 35 years plus experience, Areen Design is one of the UK's leading interior design agencies, with an international client base and a portfolio of stunning projects. Founded in 1985, they have grown to employ over 300 people.





**“Triad’s report and recommendations received universal praise within our steering group for its quality and depth of detail. All the recommendations made sense. The honesty of their observations and the realism of their advice gave us the insight we needed and helped us make the right decisions.”**

- **Mike Sturrock** | Chief Information Officer, Areen Design

## The challenge

Every IT landscape is different, and each has its own unique characteristics and constraints. Deciding on the right course of action to support business as usual operations, while modernising systems, required well thought out trade-offs. Like many trade-offs, this one was complex.

The aged on-premises technology platform, which underpins Areen Design’s Advanced Project Controls (APC) software, needed upgrading. Balancing what to re-platform and what to re-engineer needed an evidence-based approach, so that investment was proportionate to the value of the change. For example, moving an application, which will be replaced in 12 to 18 months, from on-premises to the cloud may not be worth pursuing.

Areen Design also needed a stable and reliable platform while the next generation platform was planned and delivered. Risks needed to be identified and mitigated. To make this possible, the firm needed practical recommendations and different costed options, from which the best course of action could be identified by key stakeholders including non-technical decision makers.

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Pathfinder audits are an evidence based and cost-effective way of rapidly getting to the detail needed to make informed investment decisions. Audits can take between 20 and 40 days, depending on what is audited. Their value is in identifying practical solutions to known and unknown technical challenges. Triad uses them to solve problems with technical debt, support investment decisions, plan technology modernisation and develop IT strategy for clients.

For the Areen Design's APC audit, an Ingres database, Java client application, JBoss application server, classic ASP and .NET web applications running on a mix of Linux and Windows operating systems were in scope. This resulted in 30 recommendations for improving the application and prepare it for future enhancement, rewrite or replacement.

## The result



Triad was able to identify several areas where changes would improve overall system health and application performance. These included:

### Database optimisation

A detailed review of the database structure and maintenance scripts led to recommendations that could optimise the existing database, while reducing storage needs and automating administrative activities.

### Systems administration

Several recommendations will improve the existing administrative processes without changing the core application or disrupting operational use.

### Upgrading infrastructure

Step by step instructions, for different options, to update outdated infrastructure and enable risk-based choices.

### High availability and disaster recovery

Additional infrastructure configuration options will improve current system backups and restore processes.

### Source code

A large code base was reviewed with static code analysis used to identify where improvement could be made. A small number of security improvements were also identified, and recommendations made on how to implement them.