

Building Cloud Expertise and a Next-Generation MSP Practice from Day One: 2nd Watch



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– Jeff Aden, Founder and Executive Vice President for Marketing & Strategic Business Development

Born-in-the-Cloud and Eternally Evolving to Meet the Needs of the Enterprise

Making the customer's life easier has always been 2nd Watch's top priority. As one of the first AWS Partner Network (APN) Consulting Partners, 2nd Watch chose to focus exclusively on the cloud and has been helping enterprises across the globe take advantage of cloud computing since its founding.

"Being cloud-native, we've gained many years of experience and knowledge and have built up intellectual property (IP) unique to our enterprise engagements that we can take advantage of to help customers today," says Jeff Aden, founder and executive vice president for marketing & strategic business development at 2nd Watch. "Having worked across many use cases on AWS, developing deep expertise across AWS technologies, and by maintaining low employee turnover rates at 2nd Watch, we're able to replicate work we've done for years and adapt it to what we see today while also taking advantage of the knowledge and expertise we continue to build."

2nd Watch is comprised of agile teams of AWS experts focused on providing value to customers throughout the full customer lifecycle on AWS. For the 2nd Watch team, the relationship with the customer is built upon a foundation of trust, transparency, and advocacy. "We work for the customer," says Aden. "What the company has been from day one and what it embodies today has always been based on customer feedback at every step of the customer relationship."

And while 2nd Watch built its primary business with the core tenets of a next-generation MSP—such as end-to-end capabilities, security, automation, and developing long-term relationships—in mind, the team has evolved its MSP practice based on the evolution of its customer base and requirements.

Evolving a Next-Generation MSP Practice

Customer feedback played an integral role in the 2nd Watch team's initial development of its managed service practice and continues to influence the direction of the business.

"A next-generation MSP provides customers support across the full lifecycle and becomes a key strategic partner from the onset," says Aden. "The journey begins at the professional services and integration stage, where we're able to provide agile and dynamic guidance and expertise to customers—along with ongoing management focused on optimization, support, and automation." One of the company's core differentiators is its ability to provide holistic and flexible services and support at scale through its commitment to automation.

About 2nd Watch

A leader in the post-hardware era, 2nd Watch walks alongside its clients to help them navigate and embrace change to provide better customer experiences through the blend of technology and innovation that is at our core. The company's world-class cloud native capabilities in strategic consulting, workload design, technology deployments and workload management enable its clients to have the agility of a growth company and the security of a leader.

- *AWS Partner Network (APN) Premier Consulting Partner*
- *AWS MSP*
- *AWS Competency Holder in:*
 - *DevOps*
 - *Migration*
 - *Marketing & Commerce*
 - *Financial Services*
 - *Microsoft Workloads*
- *AWS Solution Provider*



"We continually improve our services and our capabilities through automation best practices," explains Aden. "As our enterprise customers' needs have grown, we've been able to scale to meet their needs through automation and a world-class team. Internally, we have leveraged our own automation to reduce ticket volume by 20 percent."

In 2nd Watch's eyes, building a team of highly-trained, enthusiastic individuals is critical for its success as a next-generation MSP. "You can have the best technology and automation tools available, but they are meaningless unless you have the best and brightest individuals working on your team. And the breadth and depth of our technical capabilities among 2nd Watch associates is something we are very proud of," says Aden. "Many individuals hold multiple AWS certifications or are continuing their education toward multiple certifications because it increases their opportunity to serve clients' best interests."

Helping Organizations Reap the Benefits of a DevOps-Focused Practice and Take Advantage of Cloud Optimization

The 2nd Watch team finds that the conversation around enterprise cloud migration has fundamentally shifted from "Should we migrate?" to "How do we migrate?". And as enterprises today seek to move hundreds or even thousands of instances to the cloud, a next-generation MSP's guidance and support becomes a fundamental component for initial and ongoing success. 2nd Watch's mission is to anticipate the needs of its customers and build its MSP practice on the notion that the company is only as successful as its customers are at taking advantage of AWS.

"When you are migrating thousands of instances to the cloud, the margin for error inevitably increases given the different dependencies and requirements involved," says Aden. "And while large-scale migrations and ongoing workload management can be complex, it can be an efficient, successful, and rewarding process—especially when you have a long-term partner involved, like a next-generation MSP, whose success is dependent on your own. For us, success is being able to help our customers focus on providing their own customers with a better level of service and increasing their competitive edge."

Automation tooling is a critical aspect of the services 2nd Watch provides its professional and managed service customers. "Customers want to be able to develop, test, and deliver services faster, more consistently, and with continuous governance and compliance—but the internal cultural shift to building a DevOps practice that will enable customers to meet these goals after migrating to the cloud can be a hurdle," says Aden. "Through the internally-developed automation tooling we provide our customers, such as our simple accelerator continuous integration/continuous deployment (CI/CD) pipeline development tool, we can help enterprises ease into taking a DevOps approach and facilitate movement towards embracing these practices."

2nd Watch also places a lot of emphasis on providing visibility into environments and usage and prioritizes ongoing optimization of its customers' environments on AWS. "While cost savings are always something we seek to help our customers achieve, we find that optimization goes way beyond helping our customers take advantage of just Reserved Instances (RIs)," says Aden. "We help our customers by asking, 'How can we optimize your environment to be more efficient, and how can we help you to take what the cloud-native services offer to drive optimal outcomes for your business and your end users?'" The more the team is able to help customers drive and remediate optimization, the more opportunity and resources they find customers gain to invest in new areas of innovation. "Over this past year, we saved customers \$35 million from optimization and remediation that can be used to fund additional projects," says Aden.



Tackling More Complex Migrations and Helping Enterprises Strategize Long-Term

Aden believes next-generation MSPs are a crucial component to an enterprise's strategy on AWS. "If you're a large enterprise making a massive migration to AWS, then we feel it's crucial you engage with a next-generation MSP to drive the most benefit from the cloud," says Aden. 2nd Watch continues to evolve its use of cloud-native tools and is focusing on integrating more automation into the migration process. "At some point, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) will be critically important for large enterprises to leverage during and after the migration. However, the proper planning and evaluations to take advantage of this technology are necessary," explains Aden. "Typically, Cloud Readiness Assessments will identify areas where the latest technologies can be leveraged at scale. Using our Assessment tool and approach, we're helping enterprise customers begin to take advantage of AI and ML at different stages of the cloud migration and deployment journey."

"Our goal as an MSP is to align closely to our customers at every step in the engagement and be able to provide them with a deep understanding of their specific use case, the right tools in the marketplace for their use case that we've tested and had confidence in, and ease of mind," says Aden.

"We will continue to empower our associates to ask, 'How do we use new AWS services and integrate these into our products faster to drive even more value to our customers?'"

Customer Spotlight: 2nd Watch Helps Yamaha Migrate to AWS and Continually Optimizes Yamaha's AWS Environment, Saving the Company \$500,000 Annually

Established in 1960 as Yamaha International Corporation, Yamaha Corporation of America (YCA) offers a full line of musical instruments and audio/visual products to the U.S. market. YCA is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Japanese Yamaha Corporation and is one of the largest global subsidiary companies. The company had been managing all of its applications and infrastructure internally with one data center at headquarters in Buena Park, CA, used primarily as a backup facility, and all production, test, and development systems running in a colocation arrangement at an AT&T-hosted data center in Irvine, CA.

With 30-month replacement cycles for its leased hardware, the Yamaha IT infrastructure group was spending too much time replacing hardware and handling routine maintenance tasks such as patching Windows servers. After deciding to migrate to the AWS Cloud, Yamaha selected 2nd Watch to assist with its migration. 2nd Watch was able to meet Yamaha's rapid timing for migrating to AWS, manage Yamaha's environments, and provide ongoing optimization and planning services to Yamaha. "We've worked with 2nd Watch side by side on our journey to the cloud. They're always the consummate professionals, and they fit our culture very well," says Vimal Thomas, VP of the Information Technology Division at Yamaha. [Read more here.](#)

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