An online travel agency flies higher with the cloud

⊓ NetApp

With FlexPod as a platform for consolidation, uptime never takes a holiday.

A global online travel broker has been growing through acquisition and organic growth in recent years. The primary booking site and it's offshoot companies specialize in arranging travel itineraries, vacation packages and discounts for both consumers and businesses with significant travel requirements. From its beginnings as a single consumer site to a global organization with several divisions for hotels, tours and car rentals, the company is dependent on high performance access to real time data.

As the company has taken off, its IT demands can't take a holiday. Prior to an infrastructure refresh, the travel broker was running more than a dozen legacy and bespoke data centers on 14 sets of hardware. With the help of a NetApp partner, Thomas Duryea Logical, the company has migrated cloud instances and data to NetApp FlexPod, providing them repeatable methodologies, information life cycle management, remote deployment and disaster recovery. The solution paid for itself in only six months.

◦•● FlexPod®

75%
Savings on storage cost

ROI in 6 months

Supported 1,000 remote users

Following numerous acquisitions in a short timeframe – expanding staff to more than 3,000 employees – the travel broker found itself with a business, IT teams and staff operating on different systems. To optimize their dispersed systems and control cost, they chose NetApp Global Star Partner Thomas Duryea Logical to consolidate their data centers into a single architecture.

Each entity had its own way of doing things. Some were in the cloud, some weren't. Many of the systems were legacy or custom. Some of the data centers were reaching end of life and were no longer fit for purpose.

As a result, the broader enterprise couldn't move data quickly from one system to another or get any economy of scale. The problems were compounded by the choice to use three different hyperscalers – Microsoft Azure, Google cloud and AWS – using bespoke elements of each in order to do business.

With all these different technologies and architectures, the enterprise IT leadership had a choice of what to standardize on for data. They were attracted to the NetApp solution because it positioned the data center at the edge of the public cloud.

The NetApp partner designed a single consistent infrastructure layer for the enterprise. The FlexPod solution consists of Cisco UCS for the compute, Nexus switches for the data layer and Firepower at the edge. The NetApp All Flash Array AFF A220 sits over StorageGRID.

"StorageGrid is an economical way of building out a data lake," said Markus Belkin, a systems engineer at NetApp. "We have a FabricPool running on that as well, so we're tiering the cold data blocks into a bucket on StorageGrid. And we've used an instance of Cloud Volumes ONTAP."

The data fabric simplifies and integrates data management across cloud and on-premises, allowing both the partners and the enterprise's IT department to manage all data using a single interface. And with Cloud Volumes ONTAP for Azure, disaster recovery can now be achieved in the cloud.

A quick win came soon after the enterprise built out a virtualized environment during COVID-19. In a very short space of time, more than 1,000 staff were able to use the new environment to make a secure connection to their data while working from home.

Cost reductions
In another example of new efficiency are a result of consolidation is a reduction in data center spending. At one site, the enterprise was spending almost $100,000 a month with a data center just for connectivity and footprint. Using the NetApp technology, the partner was able to migrate workloads to an alternative data center where the operating expenses are now less than $20,000 a month. The ability to use the advantage of the elasticity of the public cloud is another big plus.

"We've helped them standardize architecture with the objective of being cloud-first. They now have repeatable deployment methodologies. Their IT shared services model works," said Simon Poynton, Engagement Manager, Thomas Duryea Logicalis.

Using information life cycle management, the enterprise now moves data around easily.

"If there's data ingested in Frankfurt, it's accessible and ready to be interrogated or manipulated in New York, or Sydney, or Singapore. They can now get real-time answers in Google analytics," said Stephen Persoglia, Channel Development Manager at NetApp.

Finally, the travel broker's IT team can now rapidly deploy remote offices.

"They send out a Cisco Meraki device anywhere in the world, configure it while it's in the air, plug it in when it gets there and the users are enabled," said Poynton.

NetApp products

- NetApp AFF A220

- NetApp StorageGRID

- Data Fabric

- FlexPod

- Cloud Volumes ONTAP

Cisco products

- Nexus

- UCS Mini

- Meraki

- Firepower

About NetApp

In a world full of generalists, NetApp is a specialist. We're focused on one thing, helping your business get the most out of your data. NetApp brings the enterprise-grade data services you rely on into the cloud, and the simple flexibility of cloud into the data center. Our industry-leading solutions work across diverse customer environments and the world's biggest public clouds.

As a cloud-led, data-centric software company, only NetApp can help build your unique data fabric, simplify and connect your cloud, and securely deliver the right data, services and applications to the right people— anytime, anywhere. To learn more, visit www.netapp.com

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