



Success Story

WDS Turns to the FlexPod Platform and a Managed ANS Backup Service to Drive their Global Growth Plans



Another NetApp solution delivered by:



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry

Customer Services

The Challenge

A legacy IT infrastructure characterised by different vendors' technologies had created instability in the company's SAN. At one point the SAN crashed leading to 18 hours downtime for customer call centres and having a damaging financial and reputational impact on the company.

The Solution

Complement its existing SAN with a NetApp-based FlexPod platform that provided high levels of performance, resiliency and redundancy and galvanise this with a managed backup and restore services from ANS a leading managed services provider.

Benefits

- High performing and easy to manage
- Provides platform for business growth
- Managed services backup frees IT to concentrate on strategy
- Instills confidence
- Resilient platform that advances cloud-based services

WDS, an expert in customer experience analysis and technology solutions, turned to the NetApp FlexPod platform and a managed ANS NetApp backup service to complement the current storage platform and drive the company's global growth plans.

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Customer Profile

WDS is a customer experience specialist. It captures analyses and manages technical support interactions across thousands of devices and in call centres using a proprietary cloud-based platform. It has particular expertise in telecoms and wireless technologies and business processes and has developed a raft of analysis tools that help better understand customer interactions.

It helps clients; which were chiefly large mobile companies, build more effective customer service strategies to empower customer service channels with knowledge and tools to help its client's customers buy, use and maintain their products and services.

In the summer of 2012 WDS was acquired by Xerox, to strengthen its broad portfolio of customer care

offerings. Xerox has more than 48,000 call centre employees supporting clients in 150 locations and handling more than one million interactions each day via the web and phone.

Since being acquired WDS has embarked on an expansion drive using its expertise in processes, services, contact centre data and understanding how the customer interacts with support services in the mobile sphere to other industries such as health and transport, an area where Xerox already has a significant footprint.

The Challenge

WDS, like many other companies, had grown organically and as a result it had a server room that was filled with different vendor operating systems and servers, and a HP-based SAN that was essentially close to collapsing. The fragility of its storage system was brought home with a sharp shock one day.

Jon Smith, Head of IT, WDS explained: "One day we lost three discs in one go and we went offline for several hours. We're in the business of supporting customers 24/7 and this was almost catastrophic. Customer-based call centres were impacted for 18 hours as was our ability to push knowledge through our web based API's. It had massive financial repercussions."

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Jon Smith
Head of IT, WDS

His WDS colleague, Leigh Morgan, Infrastructure Technology Lead, expanded: “Our confidence in our existing SAN understandably collapsed. We’re using customer data and this has to by definition be secure and reliable.”

Consequently the company needed to find an alternative as soon as possible. Jon Smith added: “We were drawn to the NetApp/Cisco FlexPod platform because of the advancements made with in memory expansion and stackless servers, a centralised data centre and a pre-validated design. At the same time we also took a strategic view on managed services. We understood that with the day-to-day running of the IT department expert support can be invaluable.”

With these factors in mind WDS explored a number of technologies and partners including EMC and IBM.

The Solution

As part of its technology assessment WDS engaged with ANS a managed service provider that holds the highest levels of accreditation with a raft of vendors including NetApp and Cisco. WDS’s interest in FlexPod was firmed up following engagement with ANS with NetApp also visiting the company to outline the benefits of FlexPod.

Jon Smith said: “They both spent an entire day with us and it was very clear that FlexPod was a high-performing system and that its pre-validated design just removed a whole layer of issues. EMC was very pricey and simply NetApp was the solution for us.”

FlexPod combines NetApp storage systems and Cisco Unified Computing System servers, into a single, flexible architecture, designed and validated to reduce deployment time, minimise risk, and reduce the cost of IT.

At the heart of the FlexPod design chosen by WDS sits the NetApp FAS3250. This midrange storage technology can be configured from a few TB up to 2PB providing enormous scale and flexibility. A cluster configuration allows for system upgrades and hardware replacements with no down time and performance load balancing.

Importantly WDS also charged ANS with providing a managed backup service using the NetApp technologies. It asked ANS to deliver management and maintenance of backup services with high level specifications such as backing up and making available for restore 28TB of data, data protected over a 100Mb cloudlink and 24/7 monitoring and support.

Business Benefits **Attracting new business**

Many of WDS’s services for clients were hosted on Amazon’s platforms. However, the company is able to complement Amazon by meeting client’s differing data protection needs, which change across geographies. This is providing a boost for business.

Jon Smith says: “Using the FlexPod gives us a far higher level of confidence in the resiliency and redundancy of our data storage and now AWS is no longer the first place to go to when provisioning servers. We’re very confident in the resiliency of the platform and when clients want to host their data in specific regions it’s easier for us to meet these needs. As such we’re now in the position of drawing in new business.”

“When our previous system went down it created a lot of nervousness afterwards and we couldn’t really relax until the FlexPod platform and ANS managed service where in place. This provides us with great assurance.”

Leigh Morgan
Infrastructure Technology Lead, WDS

Protection for mission critical applications

When its previous SAN crashed the impact was near calamitous on the business. By using the managed backup service from ANS and utilising NetApp tools the fear of further business stoppages have receded into distant memory.

Leigh Morgan said: “Because our most business-critical applications are now protected and recoverable in a good timeframe we can ensure that both our budget and backups are working smarter, rather than harder.”

Sharper strategy focus

The NetApp managed backup service delivered by ANS is also helping WDS refocus on more strategic business enhancing activities. “Routine maintenance and supervisory requirements are essential for managing today. By trusting key aspects of our infrastructure to ANS we can redirect time and focus towards more strategic endeavours.”

Robust reliability underpins business confidence

WDS now has resiliency and redundancy from its storage platform unlike its earlier system. “When our previous system went down following the loss of three discs it created a lot of nervousness afterwards and we couldn’t really relax until the FlexPod platform and ANS managed service where in place. This provides us with great assurance. We can lose disc shelves and it will keep on going, everything carries on working, not that this has happened,” added Leigh Morgan.

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- FlexPod platform
- NetApp FAS3250
- ANS Managed Backup Service

Partner

ANS

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