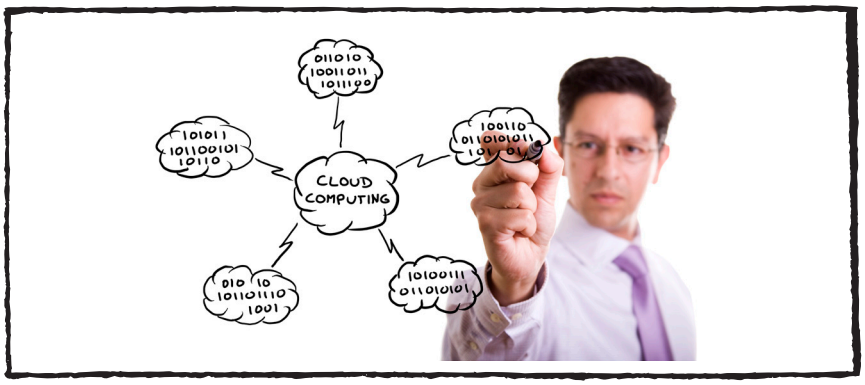
Success Story

Zajil Telecom Grows Public Cloud Footprint Easily with FlexPod and Gains Competitive Edge



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry
ICT and cloud services

The Challenge
Build a new data center infrastructure to expand public cloud services.

The Solution
Implement a FlexPod® Datacenter solution from NetApp and Cisco to run Citrix virtualization and cloud solutions; leverage NetApp implementation services to shorten time to market; rely on a Cooperative Support Model for straightforward help.

Benefits

- Achieved time to market within only three weeks
- Reduced administration and management effort
- Enable smooth operations due to seamless integration of FlexPod and Citrix CloudPlatform
- Provide high service levels for customers
- Gained competitive advantage through state-of-the-art services
- Enhance scope of services as needed

Customer Profile

Founded in 1991 and headquartered in Kuwait, Zajil Telecom (www.zajil.com) is a leading information and communications technology (ICT) service provider in the Middle East and North Africa. Its global network of 40 completely owned and managed points of presence in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia as well as long-term investments in cable systems are paramount for the company's success.

By partnering with global telecom and technology leaders, Zajil Telecom provides end-to-end connectivity and cloud and managed services, and it delivers on its goal to establish itself as "Your ICT partner."

Following an extensive MPLS service offering, Zajil Telecom entered the market for data center services in 2008 and rapidly became a major player. Today, the company operates its own data centers in Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Jordan, and the UK and offers managed services for customers of all sizes and from various industries.

The Challenge

Build a new IT infrastructure for Zajil Telecom's public cloud offering

Zajil Telecom developed its business from Kuwait's first Internet service provider into a well-established and still expanding leader in ICT services. The company has constantly adapted its service range to meet customer needs, counteract declining margins, and attract new customers. The launch of public cloud services for infrastructure, communications, and more in early 2012 was a logical move. The service evolved very well and quickly attracted large companies. Zajil Telecom saw the opportunity and wanted to open its services to a broader audience, initially targeting Saudi Arabia.

Mohammed Kazmi, senior manager, Product Development and Marketing at Zajil Telecom, set the expectations: "A short time to market is crucial for ICT service providers. We needed a cloud platform that was fast to implement and up and running right away. However, we were not only looking for products, but for a partner who would help us to make the most of the new platform."

The Solution

Change gears and deploy FlexPod for Citrix CloudPlatform

Zajil Telecom finally chose a constellation of products and vendors that fit all points of the agenda. "When we explored the market, it looked like FlexPod from NetApp and Cisco is the de facto standard for public cloud infrastructures. Of course there are other solutions out there; however, we found FlexPod's technology, flexibility, and cost advantages truly unique. Its credibility is amazing," says Kazmi.

FlexPod integrates NetApp® FAS storage and data management with Cisco® compute and networking in a fully virtualized platform to serve a variety of workload, data center, and cloud scenarios. Its standardized components are prevalidated, pretested, and preconfigured to accelerate deployments and deliver top-service quality right from the start. Dedicated design guides help customers to quickly set up virtualization and cloud solutions at no risk. Zajil Telecom relies on Citrix solutions, which integrate seamlessly with the new infrastructure stack.

With Cisco UCS® servers at FlexPod's compute core, Zajil Telecom was able to proceed with its favorite server brand and management tool, Cisco UCS Manager. The big change, however, was in the storage, when NetApp systems replaced EMC storage.

"Switching to NetApp solutions as a vital part of FlexPod was a perfect fit. NetApp storage with clustered Data ONTAP offers everything we need in terms of scalability, nonstop operations, and efficiency, and it is much easier to manage. Furthermore, there is no vendor lock-in on the software side. We are free to use any virtualization and cloud management solution with it," says Mostafa Taweel, senior product development executive at Zajil Telecom.

The implementation was both fast and flawless. Relying on NetApp implementation services shortened the process even more, and the platform was ready for production within just three weeks. And although FlexPod is a multivendor architecture, Zajil Telecom can count on flawless technical support. NetApp and Cisco provide a Cooperative Support Model enhanced by an ecosystem of software partners, including Citrix.

Business Benefits

Set the bar high for customer service

Cloud business is global business. Regional providers face competition from their peers and from giants such as Amazon Web Services (AWS) that often set the standard for customer experience and expectation. Zajil Telecom can easily keep up: FlexPod and Citrix CloudPlatform correspond perfectly so that provider and customers can fully leverage the simplicity, usability, and efficiency of the public cloud service. For example, provisioning a virtual machine and allocating storage resources through a self-service portal take only a few minutes. Built-in automation avoids involving Zajil's admin staff while saving time for customers.

"Zajil's public cloud service is state of the art and brings us a competitive edge in the region. Thanks to FlexPod with NetApp clustered Data ONTAP we are able to deliver not only fast but for sure," says Kazmi. With the NetApp clustered Data ONTAP® operating system, Zajil Telecom relies on storage that is made for nondisruptive operations, massive scale, and efficiency in many ways. The teams use NetApp Integrated Data Protection to back up data online and replicate space-saving virtual clones to another FAS storage system, thus achieving disaster recovery at less capacity and cost. Data deduplication adds to the cost efficiency.

Grow and diversify as needed

FlexPod provides the technology that a company needs for business agility. It is the combination of zero downtime and scalability of capacity, performance, workloads, and security needs that enables Zajil Telecom to expand on the spot and with great flexibility. Besides its plans for service expansion into UAE and Bahrain, the company wants to evolve the scope of the cloud platform from infrastructure as a service to a more software-related service offering.

"We found in NetApp the business partner we were looking for. And FlexPod offers such a wealth of built-in software options that we can create a variety of cloud services any time and very fast. I am confident that we can deliver on our plans in the region and beyond," says Kazmi.

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

FlexPod Components
NetApp FAS6000 storage (production)
NetApp FAS3000 storage (disaster recovery)
Cisco B200 blade servers
Cisco UCS 5100 blade chassis
Cisco UCS Manager
Cisco Nexus® switches

Virtualization and Cloud Orchestration
Citrix XenServer
Citrix CloudPlatform

NetApp Products
Clustered Data ONTAP
Complete bundle
Deduplication
Flash Cache
FlexClone® volumes

Protocols
CIFS, NFS, FCP

NetApp®

Leading organizations worldwide count on NetApp for software, systems and services to manage and store their data. Customers value our teamwork, expertise and passion for helping them succeed now and into the future.

www.netapp.com

© 2014 NetApp, Inc. All rights reserved. No portions of this document may be reproduced without prior written consent of NetApp, Inc. Specifications are subject to change without notice. NetApp, the NetApp logo, Data ONTAP, FlexClone, and FlexPod are trademarks or registered trademarks of NetApp, Inc. in the United States and/or other countries. Cisco, Nexus, and UCS are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. All other brands or products are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders and should be treated as such. CSS-6752-1014

Follow us on: