

XSP's Business Excels on CenturyLink Cloud

KEY POINTS

CHALLENGE:

XSP was hosting its entire IT infrastructure — including mission critical applications — in-house. Outages were not necessarily common, but each outage removed focus from XSP's core business. The company realized it required an enterprise-grade cloud to reap the benefits of availability, flexibility and scale.

SOLUTION

XSP selected CenturyLink Cloud for its enterprise-ready availability, security and built-in disaster recovery coupled with its proven cloud capabilities. It also gained the ability to rapidly provision and deploy technology assets in minutes, impressive performance, and by-the-hour utility based pricing. CenturyLink serves as XSP's cloud platform provider and manages its SAS-70 technology infrastructure requirements.

IMPACT

XSP can provide clients with additional flexibility for deploying its highly-scalable, secure enterprise-class platform, thus streamlining the implementation process without the need for additional IT assets or personnel. The company can also adjust to changes in market and/or client demands in a rapid and agile fashion. Furthermore, XSP can demonstrate mobile and cloud capabilities to customers while resting assured that its data and infrastructure are secure.

OVERVIEW

With headquarters in Birmingham, Ala. and offices in New York and London, XcitekSolutionsPlus ('XSP'), acquired by Sungard is the global leader in automated end-to-end corporate actions solutions. XSP helps the financial services industry mitigate the operational risks and costs associated with corporate actions processing. The company's leading-edge solution, the XSP® v5 platform, features an extensive workflow module and robust data management tools. XSP's Web-based eTRAN® and SWIFT ISO messaging modules automate the client notification and response capture and reconciliation of elections. The XSP Entitlement Management module completes the corporate actions lifecycle for true end-to-end straight-through processing. As corporate actions become increasingly complex, the implementation of a proven automated solution continues to be a top priority and a much sought-after goal among financial institutions worldwide.

Always the innovator, XSP thrives through its state-of-the-art v5 platform and the development of new offerings, including being the first of its kind to unveil a mobile solution, the XSP GO!™ mobile app. The mobile app is part of the XSP GO! Product Suite, a state-of-the-art offering designed to provide clients with customizable user interface components for major functions within the XSP platform. XSP is also embracing the Cloud and Social Networking Collaboration as the next XSP frontiers.

GRAPPLING WITH TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

As a global provider of automated software systems for financial services companies, XSP is reliant upon technology for the management of its development tools, environments and source code repositories. Before CenturyLink Cloud, XSP was

managing the entire IT infrastructure in-house. This meant that the onus was on XSP to manage its internal infrastructure in addition to managing its core competencies of the ongoing development and investment in its enterprise software solution.

"It became clear, after experiencing several outages within our data center, that we needed to find a better way of managing our Corporate IT infrastructure," says Dan Retzer, XSP's Chief Technology Officer. "We came to the realization that we needed to focus on building our core software offering and providing great customer experiences, not managing a complex enterprise infrastructure environment. We have a Corporate mantra, 'Do Only What We Do and Do it Well!' This frees up internal resources, allowing our subject matter experts to dedicate their time to our clients."

As a solutions provider for the financial services community, which must maintain secure data and follow strict regulatory requirements, XSP needed a reliable enterprise-grade infrastructure with built-in security and compliance. It was also critical to have a business continuity plan in place that would allow it to be up and running quickly in the event of an outage.

BUILDING A VIRTUAL BUSINESS

In search of a vendor that could effectively manage its underlying IT infrastructure, XSP issued a request for proposal (RFP) to several service providers. The company selected the CenturyLink Cloud for its enterprise-ready availability, security and built in disaster recovery coupled with its proven cloud capabilities. It also benefits from the product's ability to rapidly provision and deploy technology assets in minutes, and its impressive performance and by-the-hour utility based pricing.

Since 2008, CenturyLink Cloud has served as XSP's enterprise SAS-70 cloud platform provider by managing the firm's technology infrastructure, including managing firewall services, active directory, file services and SQL servers. CenturyLink also provides an environment for hosting XSP's user acceptance testing (UAT) and software automation labs.

Using CenturyLink Cloud, XSP can configure and deploy its infrastructure in a purely virtual environment via the easy to use management control panel. "After evaluating several big names in the industry, we decided that CenturyLink was the only provider of virtualized infrastructure that demonstrated a high degree of agility coupled with the security and scalability features that are critical to the success of our business," says Retzer.

IMPRESSIVE OUTCOMES

By partnering with CenturyLink, XSP has the capacity and capability to deploy its enterprise software solution into the cloud. At XSP's Client Conference in May, for example, Retzer and his team used the CenturyLink Cloud platform to demonstrate both the traditional and mobile capabilities of its own cloud offering. "I can point to the fact that we don't even have a data center, and that all of our servers and infrastructure components are in the cloud," says Retzer. "That scalability

and cost benefits of our cloud-based service running on CenturyLink Cloud is not only an attractive value proposition to existing clients, it also helps us attract new ones."

With CenturyLink, XSP has vastly improved its business continuity, and has been virtually free of service interruptions or outages since migrating off of their self-hosted environment. When its building lost power for a few days following a tornado outbreak in Alabama, XSP maintained operations with telecommuters who were able to access the platform from home. "If my data center remained in the same building as our company, our Business Continuity plans would have been severely impacted. With CenturyLink Cloud, our clients were not affected at all and we were able to resume normal operations despite the fact that our office building was without power for several days," says Retzer.

When it comes to server maintenance, XSP has reaped cost savings from no longer having to maintain and support its own IT infrastructure. Using the platform's Control Portal for example, the company's IT team can quickly service its own clients from a single point of entry, rather than having to physically manage various servers," says Bryan Boatright, Director of IT at XSP.

For the last three years, XSP has also reaped the rewards of a collaborative relationship with its vendor, whose team possesses deep expertise in complex topics like virtualization. "In many cases, we've collaborated with the CenturyLink Cloud team to help our own customers achieve best practices in virtualization," says Boatright. "That's been a huge benefit for us."

ABOUT CENTURYLINK CLOUD

CenturyLink Cloud, from CenturyLink Technology Solutions, is the complete platform to easily manage your entire business application portfolio, from development to business-critical workloads. CenturyLink Cloud offers high-performance, scalable, self-service virtual machines across our global network of data centers, including Hyperscale instances for distributed workloads that require maximum performance. And CenturyLink Cloud provides built-in automation, orchestration, and management tools for an IT-ready and developer-friendly platform that is flexible, scalable, cost effective and highly manageable. For more information, visit www.centurylinkcloud.com

ABOUT CENTURYLINK TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

CenturyLink Technology Solutions delivers innovative managed services for global businesses on virtual, dedicated and collocation platforms. It is a global leader in cloud infrastructure and hosted IT solutions for enterprise customers. Parent company CenturyLink, Inc. is the third-largest telecommunications company in the United States, and empowers CenturyLink Technology Solutions with its high-quality advanced fiber optic network. Headquartered in Monroe, La., CenturyLink is an S&P 500 company and is included among the Fortune 500 list of America's largest corporations. For more information, visit www.centurylink.com/technology.