Mercedes-Benz drives innovation with hyperconverged infrastructure from Nutanix

The automotive leader is expanding adoption of Nutanix globally to streamline processes, save time and reduce costs

INDUSTRY
Manufacturing

BENEFITS
- Substantial reductions in data center space
- Cost savings
- Faster upgrades with 1-Click Upgrade tool
- 5x faster installations compared to legacy system
- Ease of automating processes with Nutanix Calm and Nutanix Karbon
- Simpler management and user-friendly interface means time savings for IT teams
- Fast, efficient Nutanix customer support
- Successful results have led to further adoption of Nutanix in other divisions of Mercedes-Benz globally.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

With Nutanix by their side, Mercedes-Benz do Brasil Ltda. is meeting changing business demands with more speed, availability, and reduced costs. The automotive leader's new hyperconverged infrastructure has helped IT teams substantially reduce data center space, automate time-consuming processes, perform faster upgrades and installations, and simplify system management.

CHALLENGE

In operation for over 60 years, Mercedes-Benz has four plants in Brazil (located in São Bernardo do Campo, Campinas, Iracemápolis, and Juiz de Fora) and more than ten thousand employees across the country.

As the only automotive company that operates in all industry segments in Latin America, Mercedes-Benz manufactures automobiles, light commercial vehicles, trucks, bus chassis, as well as producing gearboxes, engines and axles. The pioneering company has always continually invested in the improvement of its systems.

Aníbal Ulisses Coral, IT Infrastructure Architect at Mercedes-Benz do Brasil Ltda., is responsible for servers, storages and backup for the truck and commercial vehicle divisions. "We are always looking for new solutions for systems, for greater agility, to be able to provide better tools and better access for our staff and our customers," he explained. "With more agility we can enter the market faster and launch new products quicker—so we need to have an infrastructure that is agile, of course."

SOLUTION
Nutanix Cloud Platform:
- Nutanix AHV
- Nutanix Calm
- Nutanix Karbon

NUTANIX™

Before Nutanix, the IT team at Mercedes-Benz do Brasil Ltda. had always worked with legacy applications running in three layers. "We had a traditional three-tier environment, with a server and SAN Storage network," Coral said.

With slow upgrades and installations requiring a lot of manpower, these legacy systems were no longer performing. That's why, in the first half of 2018, Coral and his team gave themselves a challenge: to find a new technology solution that could address their IT demands with more speed, more availability and reduced costs.

SOLUTION

Coral and his team immediately saw the possibilities available with Nutanix.

"As soon as we were introduced to Nutanix, we thought, 'Well, there's an interesting solution that we need to test internally'," Coral explained. "We could see that the environment—not only the applications, but also the infrastructure—was well developed and offered the simplicity and everything else we needed."

The Mercedes-Benz team's tests and evaluations resulted in the decision to implement Nutanix Hyperconverged Infrastructure (HCI).

"We bought nine nodes and set them up to have an availability with two data centers," Coral said. "That way, if one goes down we can have everything working on the other side. Very quickly, we were able to implement Nutanix and have the environment all installed and already working. We are very happy with the solution."

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

Simple to use

Coral and his team found that the Nutanix interface is very user-friendly. "The installation part and provisioning is very quiet, very fast, and all the functions we need are already built in," he explained. "The internal security features are simple to use and very fast. It's a very interesting tool."

Coral has also been able to learn on his own and take advantage of Nutanix University, part of a range of educational videos offered by Nutanix to help customers get the most from their virtualized and software-defined data centers.

Data center space reductions

With Nutanix, the Mercedes-Benz IT team is able to save a huge amount of space in their data centers. "In a solution where I would have used half a rack or an entire rack before, I am now using only four rack spaces, four clusters," said Coral. "The reduction of space is amazing."

Cost savings

Coral and his team are also enjoying the cost reductions that Nutanix can offer compared to legacy providers. "Here in Brazil, we are always looking for a solution to reduce costs. If I can eliminate licensing costs, it's money that I'm generating in cash by not spending more," he explained.

Faster upgrades and installations

With Nutanix, the Mercedes-Benz IT team is enjoying the features that save them a lot of time. Upgrades that used to take 6 hours can now be completed in just 30 minutes. The 1-Click Upgrade tool is another key benefit: by automatically adding enhancements without the need for lengthy development projects, Nutanix helps to free up time that the IT team can devote to other business functions.

Coral has also enjoyed the increased speed of installations. "When I'm going to deploy a Linux system, for example, the Nutanix environment is unmatched. I think I spend one fifth of my time installing it now compared to the legacy system. It's really fast."

Automation of processes
Coral also enjoys the speed with which Nutanix solutions help him perform key technical tasks. "With Calm, I can automate all of the activities required to create a server. Using the automated blueprint, I can gain a lot of agility in this process. To me, the environment works perfectly."

Setting up a cluster used to take Coral about three to four days. Now he's using Nutanix Karbon, things are very different. "You fill out two or three pieces of information and in a matter of twenty minutes you have a cluster with high availability and several machines, all with incredible ease," he explained. "Now, I can leave the infrastructure to Nutanix and focus my efforts on the business."

Time savings for IT teams
Before Nutanix, Coral and his team were using a three-tier environment, made up of the server, the SAN network and the storage. They needed one team to take care of the server, and another to manage the SAN network and the storage.

"With Nutanix, I don't need those separate teams," said Coral. "One person can operate the whole environment on their own. The operation is easy and the interface is very user-friendly, so one team member can handle a cluster with three or one hundred nodes without much effort."

Solving legacy issues
Coral also noted that they're no longer experiencing many of the problems they faced with their legacy systems. "Now we have Nutanix, troublesome issues in previous environments have been resolved. Some great examples: the installation time of a virtual machine has been reduced by 75%, and server reboots now only take up to three seconds."

Efficient customer service
One thing that stands out to Coral and the Mercedes-Benz IT team is the customer service they've received from Nutanix.

"Their support has always been fantastic," said Coral. "I've opened a ticket on the web and in less than five minutes there was already an engineer talking to me on the phone to solve my problem. In this way, Nutanix is a step ahead of everyone else."

Delivering on expectations
The Mercedes-Benz team has also been delighted to find that their Nutanix solution works just as they hoped it would. "In the beginning we said, 'Let's believe it and go with it'," explained Coral. "Everything that was promised to us was delivered. Fast customer support, the simplicity of the system—and what really impressed me is that everything that was mentioned before we switched exists and actually works."

Further adoption of Nutanix within Mercedes-Benz
The implementation of Nutanix HCI was a pioneering project for Mercedes-Benz, and at that time Brazil was the only country using the Nutanix hypervisor (AHV). Now, having seen the proven successful results, several other subsidiaries of the manufacturer are also interested in testing and using AHV.

Coral is happy that others are as excited about Nutanix as he is. "I totally believed in Nutanix. They explained the solution very well and we felt a lot of confidence when we took the direct step to AHV. Now, it's a path that I see everyone is going to follow."

NEXT STEPS

Mercedes-Benz's plan is to continue evaluating new technologies that will help them drive innovation throughout the business. Currently, they are considering Flow Networking and Nutanix's network automation for cloud load transshipment.

At Mercedes-Benz do Brasil Ltda., a DevOps process with Nutanix has also been started. The system currently has four servers, and the plans are to reach 80. Coral explains more: "With Nutanix, we can have a more agile development process to provide updates and new features in our apps quicker. All of these things greatly benefit, but are invisible to, the end user."

As Mercedes-Benz continues to innovate, Nutanix is proud to be by their side. "We always want to do the best work possible for our customers, using all the power of technology we can offer to enhance their IT business," adds Leonel Oliveira, Nutanix general manager in Brazil. "The Mercedes-Benz project is pioneering, a digital leap for new times, and we hope to grow even more."

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T. 855.NUTANIX (855.688.2649) | F. 408.916.4039
info@nutanix.com | www.nutanix.com | @nutanix