Airport International Group Charts Course for Success through COVID-19 Crisis with Nutanix Xi Frame

INDUSTRY
Transportation

BENEFITS
- Facilitated set up of virtual training rooms for seamless delivery of four weeks of extensive training on newly implemented Airport Management System

- Enabled business continuity for operations, finance, engineering and maintenance, IT, marketing and other teams through country-wide COVID-19 lockdown

- Enabled establishment of virtual control room, giving Operations Team secure, remote access to mission critical airport IT systems

SOLUTION
- Nutanix Xi Frame

Applications
- Airport Management System

- Airport Data Base

- Airport Resource Management System

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Airport International Group is a Jordanian consortium of local and international investors with proven experience in airport rehabilitation, enhancement, operation and management. In 2007, Airport International Group was appointed by the Government of Jordan to manage the rehabilitation, expansion and operation of Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA), which serves as a pillar of the national economy and the local aviation, transport and tourism sectors. Under Airport International Group's management, QAIA has successfully expanded, recorded significant growth in passenger numbers and received several Airports Council International (ACI) awards.

Today, Airport International Group employs approximately 450 professionals and utilizes the latest technologies and innovations to ensure that the over 50 airlines and millions of annual passengers who rely on QAIA are assured truly world-class experiences.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

To successfully maintain smooth operations across the sprawling expanse of the airport, Airport International Group relies on teams of technicians and other skilled workers. These professionals operate in shifts and require frequent access to specialized applications via shared desktops. Airport International Group's IT Team was keen to ensure that around-the-clock access to key services via these shared desktops could be provided in a secure and reliable manner.

SOLUTION

As a long-standing Nutanix customer, Airport International Group was quick to identify Nutanix Xi Frame as a perfect fit for this situation. "Providing employees with the secure access to applications using Xi Frame requires us to simply provide them with login credentials and a link - it's that easy! Moreover, from an IT perspective, we have been impressed with the ease of deployment, intuitive and powerful web-based management interface, and the guaranteed availability that the solution offers," said Waseem Al Rousan, IT Director at Airport International Group.

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

Unexpected Benefits

While the success with the primary use case alone justified the team's decision to implement the Nutanix solution, the timing of the deployment proved especially fortuitous as Xi Frame would soon prove pivotal in enabling the airport operator to maintain business continuity through the turmoil and uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Managing a Mission-Critical Migration

"At the time when the Government of Jordan announced lock-down measures, we were in the midst of a mission-critical, multi-million dollar undertaking to migrate our Airport Management System," explained Mr. Al Rousan. Equating the Airport Management System (AMS) to the 'core' of the airport, he added, "Everything, from the gates and immigrations services to check-in counters are managed by this system."

With consultants and implementation engineers suddenly unable to travel to Amman, the team's planned user acceptance and training programs for the new AMS solution looked to be in jeopardy. However, having recently experienced how seamlessly Xi Frame enabled applications to be delivered to any user on any device, Airport International Group's IT Team saw its potential to address this pressing business requirement.

Using Xi Frame, in just a few hours, Airport International Group set up a fully equipped virtual training lab with 12 remotely accessible workstations. The team then simply provided users with an access link and login credentials, granting them instant, secure access to live training sessions. "We conducted four weeks of extensive training in this manner. The experience was seamless and our employees loved the ability to attend sessions from any location, and via any device," said Mr. Al Rousan.

Enabling Business Continuity Across Departments

The ability to rapidly empower a newly formed remote workforce has been another hallmark of the Airport International Group IT Team's innovative initiatives in recent months. In less than a week, members of Airport International Group's finance, engineering and maintenance, IT, marketing and communications, and other teams found themselves in urgent need of secure remote access to business-critical applications. Moreover, employees from each of these lines of business had unique needs, requiring access to department-specific applications, ranging from accounting software and HR applications to CRM systems.

"The ease of use of Xi Frame meant we could easily and rapidly accommodate the business continuity requirements of each department in this challenging time. Moreover, rather than having to deal with the costs, complexities and inevitable slew of helpdesk requests typically associated with corporate VPNs, we could offer our new remote workers the most convenient, secure and intuitive access to the tools and applications they needed to stay productive," said Mr. Al Rousan.

"Unlike other organizations that suddenly found themselves scrambling to deploy new cloud applications for their remote workers, we could offer our employees access to the same applications they were familiar with. This enabled us to maximize utilization of our existing IT infrastructure and eliminated unnecessary costs and learning curves," he added.

The feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive and Mr. Al Rousan noted that the efforts of his team have been duly recognized by C-level executives and his counterparts in other departments. "This deployment has been a perfect showcase of IT demonstrating foresight and initiative that has in turn created new possibilities for the way our organization operates," he said.

Security Stays Paramount

With members of the Operations Team also having to work remotely, Airport International Group decided to establish a virtual control room, which enabled them to remotely access critical systems including the AMS, Airport Operations Data Base (AODB), Airport Resource Management System (RMS) in a secure manner.

"These systems are at the heart of our operations, so security is everything – irrespective of where applications are accessed from," explained Mr. Al Rousan. "Our infosec team thoroughly tested Xi Frame and seamlessly integrated it with our network access control, firewall and other backend security solutions. Rigorous vulnerability testing gave us confidence that Nutanix's solution could match our highest security expectations."

Clear Skies Ahead

Not ones to rest on their laurels, Mr. Al Rousan and his team are keen to build on their success. They are now exploring further use cases for Xi Frame, which include enhanced support for BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and robust ways to respond to unplanned business requirements.

"This project has created a shift in mindset across our organization and there is a clear appetite to explore further VDI use cases. With its extremely dedicated on-ground support and range of market leading solutions, Nutanix has proven to be a reliable long-term technology partner. Over the last three years, we have become more and more invested into Nutanix and we will continue to strengthen our business relationship with them," concluded Mr. Al Rousan.

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