

Whiddon Delivers More Efficient, Patient-Centric Healthcare with Nutanix and Fortinet

Combined solution provides a secure, scalable foundation to support always-on patient services, with plenty of room to grow on

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

BENEFITS

- Agile HCI environment provides the agility required to support new client applications and meet changing expectations, scaling up infrastructure in seconds, not days or weeks
- Robust next-generation Fortinet firewall helps Whiddon safeguard sensitive patient health information
- Improved manageability and resiliency save 8-10 hours of monthly network downtime, maximizing service availability

SOLUTION

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud

- Nutanix Prism management software

Fortinet FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall

APPLICATIONS

- Citrix VDI
- Healthcare scheduling and records
- Human resources applications
- Resident management tools
- Service scheduling applications
- Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Exchange and SQL servers

BUSINESS BENEFIT

An award-winning aged care provider, Whiddon has served elderly individuals across New South Wales and Queensland, Australia for more than 70 years. The organization firmly believes that aging should be a rich, rewarding journey for everyone, and is constantly innovating to keep pace with its clients' changing needs. To streamline its own operations, control costs, and deliver a consistently superior customer experience, Whiddon turned to Communications Design & Management Pty Limited (CDM), a leading systems integrator that offers a holistic set of services, including consulting, delivering, and managing customers' technology needs. CDM assembled and spearheaded Whiddon's

“With our combined Nutanix and Fortinet solution, we are showing our business how agile IT can be when it comes to supporting significant transformation, such as acquisitions and concurrently deploying software solutions and other initiatives for our lines of business.”

– Regan Stathers, Executive General Manager, Technology and Property, Whiddon

migration to a combined solution featuring Nutanix Enterprise Cloud running on premises, Fortinet FortiGate Next Generation Firewalls, and other best-of-breed components. Consolidating its operations onto a single hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) provides the visibility and business agility the organization needs to support new services and evolving requirements. “Now that we have a Nutanix hyperconverged infrastructure in place, everything’s under our control,” said Regan Stathers, Executive General Manager, Technology and Property at Whiddon. “We know when things are offline, and for how long. And we can control the layers of resiliency from end to end. That fabric works much better for us and delivers the outcomes we need as we move more clients and touch points across the network.”

CHALLENGES

Whiddon is relentlessly focused on enriching people’s lives and making a real difference. The not-for-profit organization serves more than 2,300 customers in the community care space, including approximately 20 residential aged care facilities and 12 independent living unit facilities or retirement villages. The network is the foundation for serving these clients, supporting everything from clinical documentation systems to human resources, resident management tools, and service scheduling applications.

“People don’t simply want efficiency, they want individualization and personalization,” said Stathers. “To provide it, you need the physical environment, the staff, and the systems and process all come together to provide access to the right environment, the right information, the right touch point, at the right time. That’s key challenge for this industry.”

As its existing network began showing its age, Whiddon realized that it would need a more scalable, secure, agile foundation to support its operations. However, its small IT staff of four lacked the resources and capabilities needed to drive a major strategic initiative. The organization turned to CDM for assistance.

“We are supporting 2300 users across 20 locations, on 24x7 basis,” said Stathers. “We had our hands full dealing with daily business-as-usual activities. After reviewing our options, we chose CDM as the most efficient, effective systems integrator. They had offered the strongest capabilities in pulling together multiple third parties and presenting a holistic, integrated solution.”

SOLUTION

CDM enabled Whiddon to outsource its project management and technical delivery of its solutions, enabling the healthcare provider to move forward on its major initiative with the support of less than half a full-time employee’s resources.

To deliver the agility and control Whiddon required CDM recommended a combined solution featuring Fortinet and Nutanix Enterprise Cloud. The Fortinet FortiGate Next Generation Firewall safeguard sensitive patient information, while the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud offers a flexible, highly manageable virtualized environment.

“The Nutanix infrastructure needs a strong, robust network behind it,” said Stathers. “The Nutanix HCI simplifies the interconnection between our core network and our compute network. It allows us to run consolidated, aggregated large pipes between our core Fortinet firewall and Nutanix, so we can work on a virtual layer to manage the prioritization and QoS for the applications and services that need to be delivered.”

The new environment provides complete support for the organization’s virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) applications on a single, high-performance platform. “VDI drives the majority of our business in terms of office bound workers, and it’s all empowered by Nutanix,” said Stathers. “We’ve seen a significant increase in performance from deploying Citrix for our traditional office and productivity applications. The environment also runs our clinical documentation systems that take care of our residential aged care environment, and resident management tools for our retirement villages and residential life care services. Nutanix also supports more than 120 mobile healthcare providers working in the field.”

Whiddon consolidated its previous network environment onto Nutanix running in two on-premises environments, built for performance, availability, and cost-efficiency. “We run our infrastructure in two separate locations, providing active-active environments for maximum resilience,” said Stathers. “Prior to the project, we had 8 to 10 hours of downtime each month, effecting 90-100 percent of our user population. The new solution has enabled us to overcome that. Since the upgrade, our Exchange servers have been running for well over 400 days without requiring a reboot.”

CUSTOMER OUTCOME

Bringing its disparate network elements together onto a single solution has enabled Whiddon to rapidly unlock dramatic savings in power, cooling, and real estate. “The smaller solution footprint requires 50 percent less power, which is a phenomenal. We’ve also increased the baseline of cooling temperatures in our server, so we can run longer with requiring cooling. Cutting back on power and cooling is key. We’ve also reduced the number of racks required in our data centers. We just don’t need the space anymore.”

Nutanix also provides a dependable, high-performance foundation to support the services that clients need, as well as a path forward for innovative new services. “We now have a platform to springboard to the next wave of digitalization and meet challenges with digital dexterity,” said Stathers. “Our Nutanix infrastructure is very easy and fast to scale, and we know we can launch new services and grow infrastructure in seconds or minutes—not days or weeks. It enables us to have the scalability and agility to launch us into the future.”

The Fortinet solution also contributes to Whiddon’s resiliency and scalability. “Our core firewall has capacity to burn and built-in redundancy. The Fortinet solution has provided us single pane of glass management across all our firewalls and brought together all 20 branch sites. We have saved 50 percent of our costs on SD-WAN and managing firewalls and edge security.”

Simple and intuitive to use and manage, the hyperconverged infrastructure solution helps Whiddon’s IT team work more efficiently and meet escalating demands. “We have an aging workforce in this industry, as well as the challenges of serving one of the fastest aging populations in the world, with service demands going through the roof. Nutanix helps us empower our human resources with the technology they need to support the right programs and the right model of care.”

NEXT STEPS

Whiddon is continually exploring new ways to better align its services with evolving customer needs and new business models. Nutanix Enterprise Cloud provides a flexible platform to support this constant evolution.

“With the changing mindset and desires of our customers, and the shift to a consumer-led market, we require our systems to enable the delivery of services to meet the customers’ choices,” said Stathers. “Nutanix gives us the confidence that we’re not going to break it every time we move forward with a major change. It allows us to be just a bit faster, and when we deploy new services and capabilities, we know that we have the infrastructure to support it.”



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