Nutanix Delivers Public Cloud Benefits on Service Provider's Own Terms

CHALLENGE

Since it was founded in 2010, Copenhagen-based service provider Zentura has grown rapidly to become a leading supplier of Citrix end user computing services to professional customers across Denmark. During that time, however, it had acquired a mix of hardware from a number of vendors and was keen to consolidate and simplify its infrastructure to both reduce operational overheads and provide a more scalable platform going forward. As CEO, Christian Pedersen explains.

"Our aim was to simplify our infrastructure and remove unnecessary costs. We would have liked to get rid of all the hardware and deliver hosting to our customers via the public cloud, but the long term costs ruled this out and we were further dissuaded by the lack of certainty when it came to how public cloud services would develop. We needed certainty so started to look for on-premise alternatives able to deliver the same instant scalability and simple management in the data centre."

That search led Pedersen to Nutanix and a pivotal demonstration at a Citrix Synergy event performed using the Community Edition of the Nutanix software hosted on a cluster of Intel NUC computing devices. Enthused by this demo, a proof of concept trial was soon organised which further convinced the Zentura CEO that the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform was the solution he was looking for.

"Of course I'd heard about Nutanix, but I found it hard to differentiate between marketing hype and reality," commented Pedersen. "The proof of concept was where I saw the magic for myself. Indeed, despite doing our best to make the Enterprise Cloud Platform fail, it answered all our questions and proved itself to be a very workable alternative to the public cloud."

SOLUTION

Following exhaustive testing on the NUC-based proof of concept hardware, the decision was taken to replace all the existing servers and storage in the Zentura data centre with the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform. The XC Web-scale Converged Appliance from Nutanix partner Dell EMC was chosen as the preferred implementation, leveraging Dell EMC's proven x86 server platform to provide a highly scalable base for the Nutanix software.

The old 3-tier infrastructure had grown to twenty servers and five SANs, taking up 48U of rack space in total. These were replaced by just six Dell EMC XC nodes requiring a much more compact 12U, with a further three node cluster deployed elsewhere for offsite data replication and disaster recovery.

Although the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform is hypervisor-neutral, able to support virtual machines using VMware, Microsoft Hyper-V or the built-in AHV hypervisor, Zentura opted for AHV, Pedersen viewing it as yet another key reason for adopting the Nutanix solution.

"VMware licensing was becoming a big cost for us," he explained, "AHV enabled us to eliminate that overhead and also simplify management with our physical infrastructure and virtual machines now all managed from the same console."

> **"We would have liked to get rid of our infrastructure and deliver our services via the public cloud but that wasn't workable. The Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform gives us the same benefits for less and on our terms."**
>
> – Christian Pedersen, CEO, Zentura A/S

RESULTS

In all, over 300 virtual machines were migrated to the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform, without any hitches but some very obvious immediate benefits. Power costs, for example, have been more than halved reflecting the much reduced rack footprint. The reduced number of CPUs (down from 32 to 12) also helps here, at the same time, enabling Zentura to save $3,000/annum on Windows Server licences without any impact on performance or the service provider's ability to deliver on-demand scalability to both new and existing customers.

A further $3,000/annum has been saved by moving from VMware to the AHV hypervisor and there have been operational benefits too.

"It's hard to quantify the benefits of having just one management interface for all of our infrastructure, but they are real," said Pedersen. "We no longer have to worry about storage provisioning or SAN management, for example, and are able to do most of our maintenance out of hours rather than having to take services offline during the day."

Pedersen has also noticed a big drop in the amount of support he needs to maintain the company's 100% availability record.

"The support needed is minimal," explained Pedersen, "but when we have had to ring up the service has been phenomenal and very proactive. Sometimes we don't even have to report an issue. I tweeted a small concern recently and next thing I knew a support ticket had been raised and the issue addressed. That's what I call service!"

NEXT STEPS

So impressed by their Nutanix journey, the Zentura team have now become a Nutanix Premier Partner, the first in Denmark and with the added advantage of being able to use their own working infrastructure to demonstrate the clear benefits of the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform to prospective customers.

It's clearly a winning combination with a lot of interest already. On top of which the company has plans to further expand its core hosting and Zentura Business Cloud services as well as adding Disaster Recovery as a Service to its menu of products, all of which are now entirely based on the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform.

Company
Zentura is a specialist service provider and Citrix partner designing, creating and hosting complete end user computing solutions for the Danish SMB market.

Industry
Service Provider

Business Need
Reduce operational costs and complexity associated with delivering hosted services using a conventional 3-tier infrastructure.

Solution
› Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform

› Dell EMC XC Web-Scale Converged Appliance - 6 nodes in main data centre, 3 nodes for offsite replication and disaster recovery

› AHV hypervisor

› Citrix end user computing

Benefits
› Hugely simplified infrastructure with enhanced scalability

› 75% reduction in rack footprint

› Power consumption halved

› $3,000/annum saving by migration from VMware to AHV hypervisor

› $3,000/annum reduction in Windows licensing

› Consolidated management with fewer maintenance windows required during business hours

NUTANIX
Your Enterprise Cloud Platform