


Drakes.

Drakes Supermarkets enriches consumer shopping experience with Nutanix

Nutanix hyperconverged infrastructure solution streamlines operations and enhances availability for nationwide automated distribution centre

Drakes Supermarkets is the largest independent grocery retailer in Australia and specializes in supermarket retailing. When the company found that its legacy infrastructure had reached end of life and maximum capacity, the organization upgraded its distribution and retail operations to the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud and hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) platform. The solution supports Drakes' \$125 million, state-of-the-art automated distribution centre, including its advanced robotics technology, warehouse management, point of sale (POS) and ERP system. The Nutanix solution provides the performance and availability the retailer needs to respond to real-time stocking demands, while streamlining operations and minimizing costs.

The 50,000 square metre facility and accompanying technology upgrade proved especially timely when the COVID-19 threat emerged.

"We've seen our warehousing and IT requirements more than double in the past few weeks," said Romano. "But we've maintained 100 per cent availability across all of our systems, enabling us to focus on taking care of our communities' shopping needs, getting staff who can do so to work remotely and hire new staff directly from the increasing pool of unemployed Australians."

"Migrating to Nutanix has delivered tremendous efficiencies in terms of business continuity and lower operational overhead. The solution has enabled us to spend less time on provisioning infrastructure resources and updating firmware, and more time to focus on our line-of-business requirements."

- Phillip Romano, IT Infrastructure Manager, Drakes Supermarkets

INDUSTRY

Retail

BENEFITS

- Enables real-time price adjustment on merchandise; very critical for margin-sensitive business
- Automation of store-wide operations to meet rapid consumer demand and order fulfillment
- High availability ensures maximum uptime for critical supply chain, point of sale (POS) and ERP applications
- Scalable, flexible solution lets Drakes accommodate rapid changes and grow for new challenges
- Unified infrastructure enables small IT team to simplify administrative tasks and monitor infrastructure health in real time

SOLUTION

Nutanix Cloud Platform

- Nutanix AOS
- Nutanix Prism management software

Applications

- Dematic Robotic Systems
- Warehouse management applications
- POS applications
- ERP applications

CHALLENGES

Since 1974, Drakes Supermarkets has been committed to providing customers with exceptional service, value for money, great range, and an outstanding shopping experience. Operating 63 stores throughout South Australia and Queensland, the company applies the principles of a family business, while supporting local manufacturers and suppliers. To support its staff of 5,500, the company depends on its enterprise network to support its most critical operations.

“We have a limited IT team, and we were up against multiple islands of aging infrastructure,” said Romano. “As we prepared to upgrade our distribution centre, we were determined to find new efficiencies along the way.”

Drakes was seeking a platform that could deliver maximum performance and availability and could easily scale to support new sites and requirements for several years. The solution would also have to be simple to manage for the 11 employees on its small IT team.

SOLUTION

To meet its new challenges, Drakes worked with Nutanix and trusted Adelaide-based IT partner Nuago to overhaul its aging IT environment and replace it with Nutanix cloud software and HCI platform. Nutanix provides support for the firm’s distribution centre, as well as its key back-end processes and POS system.

“Among the biggest applications is our POS system,” said Romano. “The entire back end of this system resides on the Nutanix environment. We have also migrated our price control system to Nutanix. This system is essential, because if it goes down, we cannot update price changes. This can have a huge impact on our cash flow if pricing is incorrect, because our policy is that customers receive the first item for free if the price does not scan correctly.”

To keep pace with customers’ demand for faster, more accurate order fulfillment, Drakes also employs Dematic Robotic systems to automate critical warehouse functions. Robots with integrated Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and visualization from sensors and cameras support order picking and other key tasks—all backed by the Nutanix infrastructure.

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

The Nutanix solution has enabled Drakes to consolidate four separate clusters running different server environments onto a single platform. With Prism management software, Drakes IT professionals can gain live access to all the data they require, through an intuitive dashboard.

“The biggest benefit of Nutanix is the fact that it is so simple and easy to pick up and use,” said Romano. “Everyone on our IT team has access to it, and they can see what is going on, see what resources are lacking, and add more resources where they are needed.”

The solution delivers not only flexibility, but the performance and availability Drakes needs to support its core supply chain operations.

“The speed of recovery and resiliency are outstanding,” said Romano. “The fact that we can rely on this and not lose sleep worrying about our infrastructure is a huge benefit. It puts your mind at ease.”

With its time-saving solution in place, Drakes can use its resources more effectively to concentrate on more strategic business issues, instead of network maintenance. “Migrating to Nutanix has delivered tremendous efficiencies in terms of business continuity and lower operational overhead,” said Romano. “The solution has enabled us to spend less time on provisioning infrastructure resources and updating firmware, and more time to focus on our line-of-business requirements.”

NEXT STEPS

With its scalable Nutanix infrastructure in place, Drakes plans to expand its environment across all its stores, and possibly to a second distribution centre site. In the months ahead, Drakes is also considering deploying the Nutanix Remote Office solutions further leveraging the Nutanix Xi IoT edge intelligence platform, utilising AI to provide real-time data insights, together with video analytics, to create new, personalized experiences for customers. The company also plans to migrate to the Nutanix AHV hypervisor to support its 250 virtual machines (VMs).

PARTNER

Nuago

Established in Adelaide, Nuago is an IT solutions integrator that uses technology to drive innovation and enable organizations. Its dedicated team of specialists guides customers through the continually evolving digital landscape while providing the best IT solutions for their businesses.



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