



EEKA pioneers digital transformation in Chinese fashion industry with Nutanix

EEKA Fashion runs business-critical SAP applications on Nutanix—becoming a shining light for the rest of the Chinese apparel industry to follow

BUSINESS BENEFIT

EEKA Fashion Holdings Ltd. (EEKA Fashion) is one of the first Nutanix customers in China. In 2014, EEKA Fashion became the first clothing enterprise to implement SAP AFS on a Nutanix hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) in the country. Three years later, the company upgraded the HCI to support the construction of an intelligent supply chain management system.

“Nutanix’s products met our requirements for a safe, reliable, and flexible infrastructure platform. What satisfies us most is the management platform of Nutanix, which is easy to operate, as well as the platform’s scalability and responsiveness. The in-depth cooperation between EEKA Fashion and Nutanix will inspire and become a reference for the digital transformation of China’s fashion industry.”

- Wu Qingye, Vice President, EEKA Fashion Holdings Ltd.

INDUSTRY

Retail

BENEFITS

- Delivers high performance, high availability, and flexibility for business-critical SAP systems
- Helps business overcome pandemic through remote working enabling continued operations
- Guarantees smooth implementation with local professional services

SOLUTION

- Nutanix Enterprise Cloud OS

APPLICATIONS

- SAP AFS, FMS, HANA
- Point of sale (POS) system
- Office automation system

With the group's expansion, new business needs emerged, and more SAP applications were added. All the while, Nutanix's HCI has performed well, without any downtime. In addition, Shenzhen Irigud Technology Co., Ltd., provided professional and proactive services to help fully utilize the Nutanix stack. Nutanix has also helped EEKA Fashion in the fight against COVID-19, enabling remote-office working that helped business operations continue as well as the deployment of the EEKA Fashion Online Center (EOC), a new platform that supports online sales.

Today, the development, test, and production environments for EEKA Fashion's SAP systems run reliably on the Nutanix platform. In the coming three years, EEKA Fashion expects to add 10-20 more nodes to enable continued growth.

CHALLENGE

Founded in 1994, EEKA Fashion is a leader in women's fashion in China, designing, promoting, marketing, and selling clothing. To adapt to a changing market and meet a more diversified range of needs, EEKA Fashion is digitally transforming operations, integrating processes from sales to the supply chain. To support rapid expansion, the business has improved its management capabilities and has seized opportunities, building a leading position in the industry. The company is hoping to continue to improve its ability to respond to change through innovative IT.

As part of the improvement process, EEKA Fashion decided to deploy SAP. The group had to decide on an underlying infrastructure for its SAP systems and looked at blade servers and a hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) as possible solutions.

Xu Yiheng, IT operation and maintenance director of EEKA Fashion Holdings, says, "We compared and tested these solutions in detail and went to no less than 10 Chinese SAP users to learn of their experiences. In the final analysis, high performance and a low TCO [total cost of ownership] were key factors. We saw that Nutanix's HCI integrated server, storage, and networking, meeting the performance needs of SAP applications and facilitating expansion, saving space and reducing power costs."

Based on these results, EEKA Fashion chose the Nutanix HCI and worked with Nutanix Partner, Shenzhen Irigud Technology Co., Ltd. (Irigud) for deployment and support services.

SOLUTION

EEKA Fashion took a phased approach to deploying SAP on Nutanix. First, the group deployed SAP AFS and because of the good performance, it then deployed SAP FMS and HANA, running the in-memory database on Nutanix NX-8000 nodes as part of an overhaul of the supply system and a major upgrade.

Since then, EEKA Fashion has increased the number of Nutanix HCI nodes to 25, including Nutanix NX-3000 appliances to support operations, development, and test environments; and Nutanix NX-8000 appliances for the production system. Despite the SAP applications being of different generations, they are all fully compatible with the Nutanix cluster. And all core business areas, such as production, supply chain, and marketing now run on Nutanix. Of China's clothing industry, EEKA Fashion is the largest Nutanix customer and the company expanded the existing Nutanix NX-8000 cluster to meet the group's growing need for IT resources in 2020.

CUSTOMER OUTCOME

HCI delivers high performance, high availability, and flexibility for SAP

In 2014, EEKA Fashion became the first group among its competitors to run SAP on a HCI in China. In 2017, the company adopted SAP FMS on the HCI to improve the efficiency of production and build an intelligent supply chain. At this point, EEKA Fashion is using the Nutanix HCI solution on a larger scale, implementing more SAP applications, gaining great performance without any downtime.

“In the use of Nutanix, we are increasingly likely to cluster deployment in a high-availability configuration, adding virtual servers when the need arises. With our POS [point of sale] and OA [office automation] systems as well as others running on the HCI platform, cluster deployment and a high-availability configuration are even more necessary,” says Xu Yiheng. “We have over 1,000 stores across the country, and the number of concurrent users is large. To support this, the HCI can tier cold and hot data using its tiering technology.”

Operates well and succeeds during the pandemic challenge

At the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected revenues at EEKA Fashion retail stores, which account for more than 80 percent of sales. Thankfully, its EOC system, which EEKA Fashion started to build in 2019, helped the company through the pandemic. The EOC, launched on January 13, 2020, supports multiple online channels and sites through one inventory channel, reducing the cost of transferring goods while improving customer experiences.

Wu Qingye, vice president at EEKA Fashion Holdings, says, “During the pandemic, the Nutanix platform operated well, supporting the promotion and application of the new EOC platform, ensuring the efficient operation of each business system and providing powerful support for remote offices and online sales.”

Localized professional services guarantee smooth implementation

Nutanix partner Irigud helped EEKA Fashion ensure the smooth implementation of Nutanix and the HCI's high availability and security. In the past year, The group has expanded the hardware and upgraded the platform several times. Engineers from Nutanix and Irigud have been responsive, and their professionalism is a key reason why EEKA Fashion is staying with Nutanix.

NEXT STEPS

In addition to SAP, EEKA Fashion has many other business systems running on the Nutanix platform, which supports hundreds of virtual servers. The group plans to gradually eliminate its legacy server and storage architecture. Front and middle-end systems will mainly be deployed to the cloud, with back-end systems staying on-premises. “Our Nutanix private cloud platform can connect to public-cloud platforms to support the retail business, thus forming a hybrid cloud infrastructure for business development,” Xu Yiheng says. In the next three years, EEKA Fashion expects to increase the Nutanix platform by 10-20 nodes. The in-depth cooperation between EEKA Fashion and Nutanix will provide a blueprint for the rest of China's clothing industry to follow as it digitally transforms.



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