

Best in class Nutanix technology enables financial services company to restructure and enhance IT services in record time

London Capital Group betting on a converged future



COMPANY BACKGROUND

Originally founded as private company in 1996, LCG has grown rapidly thanks to a dynamic approach to the industry and a business model with no operational restrictions on scalability. This approach saw the company become a financial spread betting provider in 2003, followed in 2005 by a management buyout and public flotation on AIM, the London Stock Exchange's international market for rapidly growing companies. London Capital Group also launched its first white label financial products in 2005 and now supports over 70,000 clients worldwide on a mix of Financial Spread Betting (FSB) and Contract for Difference (CFD) solutions marketed under a variety of brands.

A NEED FOR RAPIDLY RESTRUCTURING

With an eye to future international expansion, at the end of 2014 London Capital Group embarked upon a comprehensive rebranding and restructuring exercise. This included hiring new personnel and the replacement of end-of-life IT infrastructure hosting both its principal financial services and UAT (User Acceptance Testing) platform.

The original intention was to stick to a conventional server plus SAN approach. However, following recommendations from a peer organisation within the industry, the new IT team soon realised that a Nutanix converged infrastructure platform would enable them to both complete the project more quickly and deliver far more scalable and manageable results. As CIO at LCG, Blair Wright, explains:

"We started out considering a Cisco UCS solution plus Nimble storage," he told us, "but, as a small team with limited resources, the complexity of the technology involved and the time it would take to deploy were real concerns. Our first Nutanix demo, however, was a real 'lightbulb' moment, alerting us to the availability of an equally scalable alternative that could be both quicker to deploy and simpler to manage."

That initial impression was further reinforced by hands-on experience during a proof of concept trial. A trial that convinced Wright and his team that a switch to a Nutanix converged infrastructure was the best way forward even though a purchase order for the original Cisco hardware had already been raised.

"It was a real last-minute change," explains Wright. "The PO for the Cisco kit had been signed, but we just knew Nutanix was a better fitting solution, as it turns out, it was definitely the right decision for us to make."

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– Blair Wright
CIO, London Capital Group

IMMEDIATE AND ONGOING BENEFITS

Having convinced the board of the merits of the Nutanix approach work on migration to the new converged infrastructure was started immediately across both company data centres. A potentially daunting task, that migration has proved far less onerous than originally expected and is on schedule for completion within very tight timescales.

“A major factor in keeping to our deadlines has been the fact that we haven’t had the complexity of installation and diverse skill set requirement we would have had with other vendors,” says Wright. “We’ve also managed with far less heads than we thought and haven’t had to hire in any specialist storage staff.”

Another immediate benefit is a big reduction in rack space, with the original project consolidating eight racks of server and storage kit into just three which, according to Wright, would have been two if they hadn’t opted for additional redundancy to meet availability commitments.

Unfortunately commercial considerations prevent the company sharing detailed information on the performance and scalability benefits of the new infrastructure. However, according to Wright, one of the key performance indicators of any online financial trading service is deal time – how quickly the service can process transactions – and that time has been significantly reduced.

LOOKING FORWARD

With the initial phase of the migration complete, staff at London Capital Group are even more confident that the right decision has been made and are planning to migrate other systems to the new converged infrastructure including its currently hosted Exchange email server.

The move has also enabled LCG to consolidate physical compute resources using VMware with Wright and his team highly interested in moving to the native Acropolis hypervisor included in the latest Nutanix software.

Beyond that LCG is considering Nutanix Metro Availability to further enhance backup and disaster recovery capabilities as well as deployment of smaller appliances in branch offices.

Company Specifics

London Capital Group (LCG) is a leading UK financial services company offering a wide range of online trading products and platforms for retail, professional and institutional investors.

Industry

Online financial services

Business Needs

Rapid replacement of end of life IT infrastructure as part of business rebranding and restructuring exercise.

Solution

- › Nutanix Xtreme Computing Platform
- › Hypervisor – VMware ESXi

Benefits

- › Rapid deployment and migration of production systems to very tight timescale
- › Move from SAN to simpler distributed storage with integrated management has eliminated the need to hire specialist storage contractors
- › 60% lower rack footprint with significant reduction in power and cooling requirements
- › Rapid migration of all existing physical and virtual workloads to VMware environment to match in-house skills
- › Significant reduction in deal time – a key performance indicator for the business.
- › Improved agility with instant scaling to cope with new workloads and peaks and troughs in demand



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