

Ward & Uptigrove Powers a More Agile, Strategic Business with Nutanix

Leading Accounting Firm Migrates to Faster, Flexible Hyperconverged Infrastructure

BENEFITS

One of Ontario's largest independent accounting firms, Ward & Uptigrove offers expert advice on accounting, taxes, bookkeeping, human resources, and wealth management. Its staff of 100 relies on a crisp, dependable network infrastructure to access specialized financial services applications via virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI). When its existing systems began to show their age, Ward & Uptigrove migrated its VDI, server, and storage systems to Nutanix Enterprise Cloud. This hyperconverged infrastructure lets the firm consolidate multiple systems, accelerate performance, and streamline management tasks, so it can focus on the business instead of the network.

“Nutanix helps us ensure that we deliver the application performance that our employees desire. Our team is spending much less time maintaining and monitoring the hypervisor and hardware, freeing us to do research and testing for more strategic initiatives.”

- Pat Downey, CEO

INDUSTRY

Professional Services

BENEFITS

- Reduced deployment time for VDI images from hours to 15 minutes, improving business agility
- Consolidated management of siloed infrastructure from multiple consoles to a single pane of glass
- Accelerated storage performance to provide a superior user experience

SOLUTION

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud

Nutanix Acropolis Hypervisor (AHV)

Nutanix Files

Applications

- Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops
- MS-SQL
- Exchange
- General Windows server
- Citrix NetScaler

CHALLENGE

Ward & Uptigrove depends on its infrastructure as the foundation for its most essential operations. Its accounting professionals work in front of their screens every day, utilizing a wide range of bookkeeping, tax applications and other tools. However, its siloed, diverse desktop and server environments began to fall behind as the firm evolved and grew. “Our Windows 7 VDI images on our existing infrastructure were running adequately, but we began to notice lags in scrolling and other issues,” said Randy Anderson, IT Manager at Ward & Uptigrove. “We were planning to move to Windows 10 in the coming year, and we knew that we would require more resources to achieve acceptable performance. Our storage area network (SAN) was approaching end of life and began to suffer from performance issues as well.” To keep pace, the firm needed a hyperconverged solution that would ensure dependable performance for its desktop and server workloads and was easy to manage and scale.

SOLUTION

To provide the efficiency and performance its employees needed, Ward & Uptigrove migrated its servers, VDI, and SAN elements to Nutanix Enterprise Cloud. Two separate Nutanix clusters support the firm’s diverse requirements. A three-node cluster supports the organization’s Windows virtual servers, running SQL and Exchange workloads, while a five-node cluster supports Windows VDI desktops. Although the firm migrated its solution in the middle of its busy tax season, the transition was complete within a week using the Nutanix Xtract utility. “Although we performed this upgrade at the least desirable time of year, it actually went very smoothly,” said Scott Coghlin, Office Services Manager.

Nutanix enables Ward & Uptigrove to consolidate and simplify all the elements of its infrastructure, with centralized management in Nutanix Prism. The result is more efficient management and smoother scalability. “Instead of looking at four or five management consoles, for our SAN, switches, VMware, and other components, we can focus on Nutanix,” said Anderson. “Upgrades are easier, too. In the past, we would have to check compatibility between multiple elements, and carefully schedule upgrades. Now all that complexity is gone.”

CUSTOMER OUTCOME

Running its disparate network elements on a single hyperconverged solution enables Ward & Uptigrove to dramatically boost business agility, so it can respond to business changes faster, and free up IT to focus on more strategic initiatives. “There are frequent updates of our tax and accounting software, so we are always a bit cautious about updating a production image and rolling it out to more than 100 users,” said Anderson. “Our new solution lets us quickly deploy an image and test it with a few users before we push it out, so we can minimize risk.” Nutanix also expedites the time needed to deploy production images. “Before, when we rolled out an image in our old system, it could take an hour to an hour and a half,” said Coghlin. “We can roll out a new image now in about 15 minutes.”

Anecdotal feedback from users reveals that the performance of desktop applications is much faster than before. Nutanix Files also delivers software-defined file storage that is noticeably faster than its legacy solution. Latency on its new solution is measured in just milliseconds, rather than the seconds offered by its previous SAN.

NEXT STEPS

With its Nutanix solution running smoothly, Ward & Uptigrove is considering how it can continue to enhance its solution to support new capabilities and constant growth. “Our new platform helps give us more time to concentrate on our strategic development and future planning,” said Downey. “We are seeking to build a more paperless organization, and Nutanix will definitely help us achieve that.”



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