Wheels India launches end user applications 10x faster with Nutanix virtual desktops

Nutanix enables a leading wheels manufacturer to boost virtual desktop infrastructure performance while eliminating IT downtime to improve productivity

INDUSTRY
Manufacturing

BENEFITS
- Employees launching virtual desktops 10x faster
- Company eliminates downtime to improve productivity
- 30-minute data recovery time minimizes disruption in an emergency
- IT productivity increases with simplified management
- Greater file storage allows managers to make better business decisions
- Working from home is seamlessly enabled during COVID-19 lockdown

SOLUTIONS
- Nutanix Cloud Platform
- Nutanix AHV
- Nutanix Prism management Software
- Nutanix Files

BUSINESS BENEFIT

Wheels India Limited is a leading manufacturer of wheels for automotive companies around the world. The company operates 24/7 across multiple sites where production lines need to operate seamlessly to meet delivery schedules. Operations, however, were impeded by the poor performance of the existing virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI)—used by 95 percent of employees—which caused delays of five minutes to assess applications. Plus, downtime was a constant issue. By upgrading the aging three-tier environment to Nutanix Cloud

> "Disaster recovery is automated too, therefore the recovery time for a lost file isn't hours anymore, it's less than 30 minutes, meaning much less disruption to the business."
>
> – Mr Saravanan Krishnan, IT Manager, Wheels India Limited

> "Employees could wait up to five minutes to log in to their virtual desktops, causing lost productivity. With Nutanix, boot times are less than 30 seconds—giving staff a better experience and allowing Wheels India to meet its business goals."
>
> – Mr JV Chalapathy, IT Divisional Manager, Wheels India Limited

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- Webmail
- Microsoft Office
- File servers
- In-house production applications
- AutoCAD
- Citrix XenServer

Platform with the support of Nutanix Partner Pentabrains Solutions, VDI performance was massively improved and enabled staff access to their desktops 10x faster to keep production on track.

CHALLENGE

Established in 1962, Wheels India Limited (Wheels India) is one of the largest steel wheel manufacturers in the world. It is part of TVS Group, a multi-billion-dollar industrial conglomerate based in Chennai, whose companies build automotive parts for sale worldwide.

It takes precision to manage a 24/7 operation where the finished goods need to be shipped on time with the quality assurance checks all made during production. To keep the operation running like clockwork, Wheels India depends on its IT systems for support; yet the legacy three-tier infrastructure in place was failing in key areas.

A main issue was downtime which equated to three days out of every month. Employees couldn't always access the business applications and the tools they rely on in the offices, on the production floor or in the research and development labs. Capacity issues also meant staff sometimes had to delete files on the file servers if they wanted to save new documents. Saravanan Krishnan, IT Manager at Wheels India, says, "The problem was the deleted files were sometimes needed in meetings, which in turn made effective decision-making harder."

Day to day, 95 percent of Wheels India staff use a Citrix-based virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) to access applications such as webmail, Microsoft Office, file servers, in-house production applications and design packages like AutoCAD. "At 8.30am each day, when 700-plus employees tried to log on to their applications, waiting times to access desktops was up to five minutes," says Mr Krishnan. It led to employees staying signed into their desktop sessions throughout the day even when they were not using their machines. Besides the security risk, this further degraded the overall VDI experience due to limitations on IT capacity."

Wheels India looked to refresh its IT and simplify operations. JV Chalapathy, IT Divisional Manager at Wheels India, says, "Multiple IT teams were needed to manage servers, storage and networking domains. However, scaling systems, upgrading and patching were never straightforward processes." They were time consuming because each IT team had to support the process and make multiple adjustments. In addition, backing up processes were complex and slow, and it could take the best part of a working day to restore files.

SOLUTION

The company sought to simplify IT management while improving IT performance, scalability, and disaster recovery to provide greater support to employees and the business. It looked at replacing the legacy infrastructure with a Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform and launched a proof of concept where it compared Nutanix with solutions from Dell Technologies and HPE. The IT team went through all the features of each vendor solution in detail and found that Nutanix addressed the main IT issues. It was a one-stop-shop solution.

Wheels India implemented the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform with the support of Nutanix Partner Pentabrains Solutions, following a two data center active/passive design. Mr Janakiraman, CEO of Pentabrains Solutions, says, "The solution comprised a total of seven nodes with all-flash for primary applications and hybrid storage for disaster recovery capabilities." As well as Nutanix Core products such as AOS, AHV and Prism for single-pane management, Wheels India also implemented Nutanix Files for scale-out storage for unstructured data files. With the solution in place, the organization migrated the VDI to Nutanix along with file servers, email, several production application workloads and Microsoft Office.

CUSTOMER OUTCOME

Company eliminates downtime to improve productivity
Migrating away from a legacy three-tier solution to Nutanix through the support of Pentabrains Solutions has enabled Wheels India to dramatically improve the reliability of its IT. As such, the company has eliminated the downtime that plagued the organization and hindered the smooth running of operations. Mr Chalapathy says, "For the first time, the IT team can draw up strict service level agreements for end-users, giving managers greater peace of mind that production runs on schedule."

Wheels India can also build on the success of the Nutanix HCI with Pentabrains Solutions over time. "We're on a journey with Nutanix that will allow our IT to keep pace with the changing needs of the business," comments Mr Chalapathy. "It gives us peace of mind that we have the expertise of Pentabrains Solutions to help guide us along that journey and realize the full value of our investments."

Employees launching virtual desktops 10x faster
With so many staff using the VDI environment, Nutanix has touched almost everyone's working life. When hundreds of staff log in to their Citrix desktop in the morning to access applications, they are waiting less than 30 seconds, instead of five minutes previously. The knock-on effect of faster logins has been an uptick in performance. Srinivasan S, Senior Manager-Plant Engineer, says, "Quite quickly, minutes saved in the morning and throughout the day become hours saved in lost productivity, helping Wheels India meet its business goals."

Working from home is seamlessly enabled during COVID-19 lockdown
Having an updated VDI solution already in place meant that when COVID-19 struck, personnel that needed to access IT from home could do so with ease. Comments Mr Krishnan, "An already stressful situation was made better because staff could access their business applications quickly, whenever they needed to with Nutanix."

Greater file storage allows managers to make better business decisions

The increased capacity of the Nutanix platform and Nutanix Files mean greater file storage. Deleting files to make room for new ones is a thing of the past, so managers are assured of the information they need for better decision making. There are no more meetings where an important spreadsheet might be missing. Everyone has the data at their fingertips.

IT productivity increases while 30-minute data recovery time minimizes disruption

The IT team no longer needs to be divided up into small teams for different domains. Management is done through a single console using Prism, with upgrades, patching and scaling automated. Mr Krishan says, "Disaster recovery is automated too, therefore the recovery time for a lost file isn't hours anymore, it's less than 30 minutes, meaning much less disruption to the business."

NEXT STEPS

Broadly speaking the IT has stopped fighting fires and more resource can be focused on strategic projects. This will include a forthcoming migration of Wheels India's SAP enterprise resource planning systems as well as major Oracle and Microsoft SQL Server databases.

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