

USSC Banks on Nutanix in Providing Crucial Financial Services to the Underbanked

Philippines homegrown financial service provider utilizes Nutanix as a production environment to deliver great service and innovative products to communities across the country.

About Universal Storefront Services Corp. (USSC)

Industry: Financial Services

Geo: APJ

Website: ussc.com.ph

Applications

- Money transfers and exchanges
- Bill payments and ticketing
- Cash cards and e-wallets
- MySQL

Products:

- [AHV Virtualization](#)
- [AOS Storage](#)
- [Intelligent Operations](#)
- [Nutanix Cloud Infrastructure \(NCI\)](#)
- [Nutanix Cloud Manager \(NCM\)](#)

Solutions:

- [Business Critical and Enterprise Apps](#)
- [Data Protection & Disaster Recovery](#)
- [Databases & DBaaS](#)
- [Sustainability & IT](#)

Ready to get Hands-On?

[Take a Test Drive](#)

Overview

USSC plays a key role in the lives of many people, helping them make international and domestic money transfers to their families. With Nutanix, the company is better able to bring a wide range of digitally based financial services to Filipinos, particularly those who traditionally haven't had access. These include mobile app-based and physical cash cards as well as other highly convenient financial

products.

Key Results

Responds quickly to the needs of the underbanked

Ensured communities without local banks gained government relief payments and ongoing access to financial services.

Drives new levels of innovation

Helped USSC bring to market new digital services to compete better in a growing sector.

Reduce TCO for IT by 60%

Drove down the cost of IT, including lowering maintenance and power expenses by 40% each.

“With Nutanix, we can capitalize on the changes that technology is bringing to our industry — making it easier to develop game-changing financial services for our hardworking customers.”

Jess Madamba

Head of Information Technology, USSC

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Challenge

Universal Storefront Services Corp. (USSC) provides a range of financial services, including money transfers, bill payments, cash cards, e-wallets, micro insurance, and money exchanges. It processes roughly 5% of all domestic and international money transfers in the Philippines, worth around \$3 billion annually, and is the country's number one agent of Western Union.

USSC operates in an expanding market—which is growing at a compound rate of over 13% a year—and is up against other financial service providers seeking new growth opportunities. Therefore, the company, which runs more than 850 physical stores across the Philippines where people can drop by to access its services, needs to remain competitive. Services have to be convenient and reliable, and the business must continue coming up with new ideas to deliver greater value.

“This was becoming impossible with our legacy three-tier architecture,” says Jess Madamba, head of information technology at USSC. “We had regular downtime and too much resource was spent on basic management when it should have been focused on development.”

Solution

USSC wanted to migrate the main applications supporting its services to a highly scalable and simpler-to-manage on-premises private cloud.

“Our analysis showed the costs of a public cloud infrastructure were higher; and from a compliance standpoint, on-premises made better sense because we wanted full control of our data,” says Madamba.

The company ran multiple proof of concepts (POC) for a range of solutions before selecting the Nutanix Cloud Platform.

“We found Nutanix intuitive, and the local support in the Philippines was really good. It gave us a lot of confidence,” remembers Madamba.

The company deployed a single Nutanix cluster, which it has since increased to two to provide disaster recovery (DR), and began migrating over all business-critical systems. These include applications for money transfers, bill payments, cash cards, e-wallets, ticketing, and money exchanges.

“We have 98% of our systems running on Nutanix and we're in the process of moving across the remainder, including our know-your-customer (KYC) solution, right now,” says Clarence Panganiban, senior system administrator at USSC.

For high-performance storage, USSC has AOS Storage and uses AHV virtualization software as well as Intelligent Operations (Prism Pro) for simplified administration.

Customer Outcomes

Responds quickly to the needs of the underbanked

Thanks to the flexibility of Nutanix, USSC can respond quickly to new business opportunities. For instance, the government wanted to distribute financial aid to families across the Philippines whose livelihoods had been hit by COVID. In many cases the families lived far from banks and other institutions where the payments could be made, and therefore officials were looking for an organization that could go into these places and process the payments.

USSC was able to develop cash caravans to bring much needed aid to communities isolated by COVID restrictions, using Nutanix to ensure KYC compliance and identity verification. The great news for these communities was that they received their money faster and at a more accessible location. For USSC, it has now established a model that can be used to provide financial services to these underbanked groups.

Drives new levels of innovation

With its Nutanix Cloud Platform, USSC IT systems have the performance and flexibility to keep the business competitive.

"We're now among the top 10 providers of remittance services in the Philippines and we're developing new services all the time," says Madamba.

Since moving to Nutanix, the company has applied continuous improvements to its mobile app, providing customers with services such as e-wallets and remittance transactions. USSC also released their first ever EMV-chip with QR Ph (national quick response code standard) cards in the Philippines and plan to introduce more of such innovative card products in the near future.

"No matter what new services we come up with and what additional resources we need from IT, we find the Nutanix Cloud Platform can handle it," comments Madamba.

Increases insight with greater agility

USSC can leverage its growing amounts of data to deliver greater value to customers. It has the agility to launch new servers with cloned data in less than one hour to support teams looking to develop breakthrough services or understand the needs of clients better.

"Say a request comes in from our marketing team which is launching a new campaign," says Panganiban. "We can give them access to a server with the client data they need in 30 minutes—when before it could take us 3-5 days."

Reduces TCO by 60%

Besides improving agility, USSC has also significantly reduced the costs of its IT after migrating to Nutanix. Madamba estimates the company has lowered the total cost of ownership (TCO) by 60%, which includes maintenance cost savings of 40%. As well as boosting the bottom line, the savings also free up resources to invest back into the business.

"So much has changed since we moved to Nutanix," notes Panganiban. "It's supporting both our IT and our organizational goals."

Greater sustainability with 40% power saving

Included in the TCO saving is also a decrease in power consumption that is helping USSC meet its sustainability aims. Panganiban estimates the IT team has lowered power usage by at least 40 percent by moving away from the legacy three-tier solution.

"Nowadays, it's more than just saving money, it's also about protecting the planet," says Panganiban. "With Nutanix, we can do both."

Minimizes disruption with 99.998% uptime

Both Panganiban and Madamba are no longer worried about suffering a massive outage like the one they did on one fateful Friday 13th, when the legacy platform went down. It led to 12 hours of disruption, severely impacting customers. With Nutanix, however, this is unlikely to happen again, with 99.998 percent uptime and with near-synchronous data replication to a disaster recovery Nutanix cluster.

"We take regular snapshots of our data using Rubrik to achieve an RPO of less than five minutes, reducing any possible impact on our operations," Panganiban says with confidence.

Next Steps

USSC is now looking to the future with Nutanix and evaluating products such as Nutanix Cloud Manager (NCM) Self-Service (formerly Calm). The technology helps teams manage, deploy and scale applications across clouds, including hybrid and multicloud environments.

"For years, we found it hard adapting to change because of the inflexibility of our old platform," says Madamba. "But with Nutanix it's different, since the solution is so fast and easy to use. Nowadays, we actively look for change to keep delivering better services."

NUTANIX

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