QUALCOM

Nutanix and Qualcom MSP partnership drives end user transformation for fast moving and fast growing fresh goods logistics business

Ireland based MSP Qualcom is growing the scope and size of its customer base by taking on large projects in close partnership with Nutanix
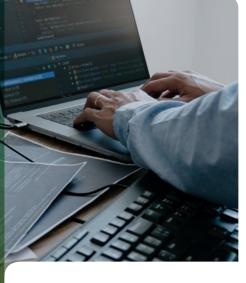
BUSINESS NEED

By recommending the best technology and providing outstanding services, expertise and support, rapidly expanding MSP Qualcom serves clients throughout Ireland and the UK. When a major logistics customer in the fresh food supply chain embarked on a digital transformation strategy Qualcom enabled a major infrastructure upgrade and migration to help grow the business. This was the first successful example of Qualcom and Nutanix partnering to provide a transformational infrastructure solution. Since then, Nutanix and Qualcom management alongside its team of Nutanix Certified Professionals have worked closely to build the partnership to open up new business opportunities.

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>
> – David Kinsella, Technical Director, Qualcom

INDUSTRY
Managed Service Provider

BENEFITS

- In a mission critical customer environment Qualcom transformed IT from a complex three tier architecture to a robust, simplified hyperconverged infrastructure solution

- Operations monitoring and management using Nutanix Prism results in better services to the end user customer

- Met the customer need for rapid set up, pain free migration and simplified management

- Delivered improved customer service levels due to simple upgrades and expansion

- Replication to the cloud using Xi Leap removes any concerns about security and disaster recovery

SOLUTION

- Dual four Lenovo ThinkAgile HX nodes parallel clusters

- AHV hypervisor

- Prism management pane

- Xi Leap

- Nutanix Move

NUTANIX.

CHALLENGES

After more than 20 years in business it was eight years ago that Ireland based IT supplier Qualcom began its transition to becoming a leading MSP serving customers throughout the island of Ireland and across the rest of the UK.

With Nutanix as a key portfolio partner, Qualcom is rapidly growing its business by building a team around product tool set expertise to deliver outstanding managed services using Nutanix hyperconverged technologies. Qualcom began its partnership with Nutanix when a large existing customer asked it to evaluate the market for a major hardware refresh project.

The customer is a growing logistics company with a reputation for its quality of service, trust and reliability in fresh food distribution which had expanded rapidly over the previous decade - Qualcom played a vital part in the IT operation for the client by providing guidance, strategy and day to day expertise.

The service provider had been maintaining an ageing three-tier architecture comprising multiple server OSs, SANs and VMs. Over time the environment required ever more resource intensive patching updating and other support. Keeping systems patched with firmware updates became increasingly challenging. This was not helped by the fact that the logistics client's available support windows were restricted to unsociable time slots of three or four hours at weekends or overnight. A more reliable, simplified approach was required. As the time for a refresh approached, Qualcom was asked to design and implement best in class technology for the business.

Says David Kinsella, Technical Director at Qualcom "We supply the expertise so as a service provider Qualcom has a massive responsibility in recommending solutions. When we are asked to look at what was available on the market, customers rely on us to bring the best in new tech so that's we did with Nutanix. When we recommended Nutanix for this major refresh project we knew it would change the way the client's IT function operated. The client has a huge amount of trust in us."

We looked at the benefits of bringing in Nutanix to this customer to take out that three tier architecture and replace it with a hyperconverged solution. There was only really one option, which was Nutanix. Prior to embarking on the project Qualcom first had several team members become qualified Nutanix Certified Professionals.

SOLUTION

To move from a complex three tier architecture to a robust, simplified hyperconverged infrastructure solution in a tight timeframe, Qualcom used Nutanix Move virtual appliances, the cross-hypervisor migration solution to migrate VMs running on a VMware hypervisor and vCenter with minimal downtime. Live workloads running on VMware were moved across onto Nutanix AHV. Now straightforward operations, monitoring and management using Nutanix Prism means Qualcom can provide better services to the end user customer.

Once Qualcom placed an order the solution was on site within 8 weeks where the Qualcom Nutanix certified professional team ran the set-up, configuration and migration project over the course of 30 days.

The migration piece used Nutanix Move virtual appliances. Nutanix Move is the cross-hypervisor migration solution to migrate VMs running on a VMware ESXi hypervisor and in vCenter with minimal downtime.

"We needed live workloads running on VMware across onto Nutanix AHV. We first picked time slots to bring over the Tier 3 non mission critical VMs. Then there was a very intense window on the Sunday afternoon between 4-9pm when Qualcom migrated all Tier 1 workloads. In one period more than 30 workloads were moved from VMware to AHV using the Nutanix Move application. Following the migration, the VMs were

prepared to run on the new AHV Hypervisor. This was completed in a four-hour time slot without a single issue. Then we had an hour to check everything and got the customer to check all their applications. It was intense, but the technology worked so everything was good," says Kinsella.

Another factor was the hypervisor-neutral nature of the Nutanix software, making for much easier migration while also saving on hypervisor costs as Harder, again, explains: "Due to warranty limits we needed to migrate 100 existing VMware VMs as-is, but when it came to virtualising additional physical servers we were able to use the AHV hypervisor, for which no additional licensing is required. AHV will also keep costs down when it comes to our planned VDI development with further savings whenever legacy applications are upgraded or replaced to run on the Nutanix hypervisor."

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

Successful, straightforward project execution was vital for the end user company which plays an important role in the food supply chain. With more than 70 trucks distributing fresh produce and other vital food supplies from its logistic hub daily, the client required a system it could trust 24/7.

From a service provider perspective stability is paramount for Qualcom. Upgrading firmware and patching now takes less time and fewer resources are needed. Qualcom gets advance warning of any potential issues and works to make sure system outages are avoided.

For operations monitoring and management, Qualcom found the notifications on the health of the Nutanix systems to be very straightforward through a home dashboard which gives an instant graphical visualisation looking at CPU, memory bandwidth, latency and storage utilisation and dedupe.

Disaster recovery was a major customer concern. However, with Nutanix the replication and recovery plans are built in meaning Qualcom simply sourced a license on each cluster and enabled it. There was no additional hardware requirement. As the solution is all in the software and managed through a single pane of glass, this means no longer having to bounce between different appliances. Qualcom now monitors different protection and DR policies for different workloads. For example, tier 3 machines can be replicated every 24 hours while near synchronous replication is provided for mission critical workloads.

"We can also ensure headroom capacity and ease of expansion of the infrastructure and the straightforward addition of extra nodes on Nutanix makes this extremely easy."

NEXT STEPS

Proving that it could migrate a sizable existing customer from a complex and difficult to manage three tier architecture to a Nutanix hyperconverged solution has opened up new market opportunities for Qualcom. With over 100 clients to support across different equipment stacks, Qualcom is looking to make customer's lives much easier.

As an MSP partner, Qualcom engages with the Nutanix team regularly for client support, information sharing and technology updates. "The team on the ground in Ireland is always open and available. As a growing service provider with 40 staff this was a major factor for Qualcom partnering with Nutanix."

"We deliver big projects for enterprise and government clients, so it was important for us to be confident that we would have a strong team within Nutanix who could be heavily involved in the design and architecture decisions. And this is exactly what we have," says David Kinsella.

"We wouldn't be in business if we didn't have reliable solutions to deliver to our customer base. This includes being able to look down the road and provide solutions that match where clients want to go."

With hybrid cloud infrastructure on the rise, the ability to replicate onto the cloud into a Nutanix datacentre is something that is of interest to clients using the existing and developing Nutanix product stack.
Being able to replicate to the cloud using Nutanix Xi Leap and manage it using Prism, means service providers such as Qualcom can deploy their existing expertise to enhance and expand service options in areas such as disaster recovery and replication. From desktop as a service to cloud Qualcom also sees many opportunities on the Nutanix technology roadmap.

"Once we actually got under the covers and understood what Nutanix was going to bring to the table and how it was going to benefit the customer, it was an easy decision for us.
After our first initial engagement and deployment with Nutanix we now have more on the table that we are offering into our customer base. This was our first adventure," says Kinsella

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