

Nutanix Helps Canadian Insurer Stay on the Leading Edge of Innovation

Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) Supports Brokers and Customers with Scalable, Flexible Hyperconverged Solution.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Since 1945, Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) has delivered insurance services to insurance brokers and customers throughout Canada. This Crown corporation depends on its network to support the home-grown applications for its two primary automobile and general insurance businesses. As part of a major initiative to modernize and speed up infrastructure deployment, SGI is migrating its workloads to Nutanix Enterprise Cloud. This solution gives IT the speed, flexibility, and manageability the company needs to keep pace with nonstop changes. "Agility has become more important to our business, and our stakeholders want turnaround in weeks instead of years or months," said Brent Chick, IT Team Lead at SGI. "Nutanix is a good way to prepare for an unknown future. We can start small, and if we need to scale dramatically and quickly, I simply buy more nodes. It's a natural fit that way."

“Our Nutanix solution has improved our organization’s agility. Treating our cluster as a single pool of resources means that when someone asks for something, I don’t have to play Tetris to make it fit onto any specific server.”

- Brent Chick, IT Team Lead, SGI

INDUSTRY

Public Sector

BENEFITS

- Single pool of IT resources powers business agility
- Automated VM deployment improves flexibility
- One-click software and firmware updates streamline management

SOLUTION

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud
Nutanix AHV Acropolis
Nutanix Flow

Applications

- Custom-built insurance applications
- Database platforms
- Web applications
- HashiCorp Terraform

CHALLENGE

The SGI IT infrastructure is the foundation for the company's key operations, including supporting insurance claims, HR, financial operations, development, salvage, and business intelligence. It supports 2,600 users and 500 brokers, running at two active data centers. "Our applications are internal and external," said Chick. "For automotive insurance, customers can sign in, view their policy, driver history, and other information. Brokers can also login to access policy and claims information, underwriting tools, and more. We have about 40 small applications running within the general insurance application."

When a company executive decided to transform the company into a fully digital insurer, the IT team's focus shifted from cost to agility and reliability. "Our business stakeholders had some issues with the way we delivered the applications and wanted to speed up deployment cycles," said Chick. "That evolved into a corporate-wide digital transformation project. Instead of asking how we can do something in the cheapest way, we now ask how we do it in the quickest, most efficient, reliable way."

SOLUTION

To build a more flexible infrastructure that could scale and evolve quickly and easily, SGI began migrating its virtual machines (VMs) from its Citrix servers and Dell storage to a single Nutanix Enterprise Cloud solution, with Nutanix AHV hypervisor. "We felt that Nutanix provided the most flexible, adaptable solution. We could choose our hypervisor, choose our node types, and we weren't tied to those decisions for more years than necessary. Now that we have a simple procedure down, the migration procedure goes remarkably fast."

With Nutanix, Chick and his team can monitor, manage, and modify the company's infrastructure from a single centralized dashboard. Instead of spending time on troubleshooting and network administration, IT can focus on growing the business. "With Nutanix, I can build until it's time to buy another node, plug that in, and my total capacity increases," says Chick. "If executives change direction, I know I can just fit those new demands in. I get to say yes in meetings a lot more than I used to."

RESULTS

Nutanix has empowered Chick and his IT team to play a more strategic role at SGI, providing the flexibility it needs to bring new features and capabilities online fast. To support DevOps initiatives, the team is using the HashiCorp Terraform open-source infrastructure as code software tool. "Using Nutanix and Terraform allows me to create, destroy, or replace hundreds of VMs without any manual steps," said Chick. "What I normally would have done in a cloud environment I can do on premises, because so much of the traditional work around disk and network has been abstracted away using Nutanix. I don't pick hosts or logical unit numbers (LUNs). I just tell the cluster, 'build this' and the cluster figures out where to put it."

The one-stop management solution also helps IT simplify administrative tasks, to keep the infrastructure fully up-to-date, secure, and dependable. "I've placed a lot of faith in the engineering behind the solution and have learned that my trust has not been misplaced," said Chick. "I routinely perform one-click software and firmware updates during production hours with minimal supervision. It not only saves us time but saves us the complexity. I don't have to assign someone to do it. We are more patched now than in the last ten years."

NEXT STEPS

Although SGI is still completing its migration to Nutanix, Chick and his team are already considering ways to take advantage of the scalable, flexible solution. To support stronger security and application-centric networking, the team is testing Nutanix Flow. “We’re about 40 percent complete in our migration, and should finish in the next year,” said Chick. “After that, we will start a microsegmentation project to improve security. I installed the Nutanix Flow demo, experimented with it, and it works well.”



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