Bringing Managed IT Services to Saudi Arabia

Saudi Telecom Company secures first mover advantage for cloud services.

Customer Name: Saudi Telecom Company

Industry: Service Provider

Location: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Number of Employees: 25,000

Business Impact

- Ability to reach new segments, increase market share, and grow revenue
- Usage-based services will help increase customer satisfaction
- Project risk and time-to-market have been significantly reduced

Case Study

Business Challenge

The Saudi Telecom Company (STC) is a leader in providing integrated communications services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Bringing innovation to its customers through the early adoption of transformational technologies is central to the company's strategy.

In 2006, STC became the first provider in the Middle East to deploy an IP next-generation network, helping ensure capacity of 9.2 terabytes per second at any time. Based on Cisco® Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) technology, this investment laid the foundations to deliver high-quality, triple-play (voice, video, and data) services, while standardizing operations and lowering the cost of service delivery. The following years were spent extending its presence and customer base, both at home and internationally.

Recently, the company's focus has widened toward new world data centers that harness the power of virtualization and cloud technologies. In 2010, it achieved another first for the region with the launch of Cisco WebEx™ technology. The web-conferencing solution is hosted centrally and delivered as a software-as-a-service, via Cisco Collaboration Cloud, a series of highly secure data centers located strategically around the world near major Internet access points.

By subscribing to Cisco WebEx, participants can join meetings from any computer with an Internet connection and most smart phones. Calls are free for participants, whether they phone in, or choose the callback option. WebEx has already proven to be very popular with STC customers with multisite operations looking to improve collaboration while reducing costs and carbon footprint.

Not content with this success, STC wanted to take its cloud strategy a step further by moving beyond traditional co-location services where customers provided their own servers and paid for connectivity and space. The provider's vision was to virtualize infrastructure, platforms, and software so each could be delivered as a service. The first steps towards achieving this vision involved the creation of a state-of-the art greenfield data center.

"When we considered our cloud options, it became clear that no one vendor could provide the complete solution: networking, computing, storage, security, and management components. What we wanted was to be able to take the best of the best, in a way that retained accountability without the headache of managing multiple relationships, or increasing risk in terms of the technology not working or delays in delivery," says Samir Matboly, vice president, Enterprise Business Unit, STC.

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> Vice President, Enterprise Business Unit, STC

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Continued

Case Study

Solution and Results

To create the new environment, STC decided to partner with the Virtual Computing Environment (VCE), a coalition formed by VMware, Cisco, and EMC specifically to help customers to minimize risk, cost, and deployment times for their private cloud implementations.

This solution is achieved by using proven methodologies, clearly defined processes, and pre-integrated and validated solutions. These Vblock™ Infrastructure Packages are designed to meet the needs of customers across the lifecycle of their virtualization journey, from initial planning to design and implementation.

"Previously each vendor would have made a separate approach and presented their individual view of the world, telling us why their solution was the best. There would then be the usual discussions on price and features. With the VCE proposal, we received access to a wider pool of knowledge, plus all the benefits of a single contact point, one design, and one specification," says Nabiel Al Haider, head of ICT Service Development, Enterprise Business Unit, STC.

Cisco global and regional teams, in collaboration with the VCE team, conducted a series of dedicated data-center-focused workshop sessions to share best practices in designing and operating data center solutions with STC. They also provided a Saudi market-specific services creation and market demand analysis for revenue calculations.

The Vblock-enabled private cloud solution was delivered by Cisco partner Wipro and comprises various Cisco Unified Computing technologies, including the Cisco Unified Computing System chassis, blade servers, SAN Switches, EMC Storage and Backup, and VMware vSphere.

The VCE rapid deployment model, another first for Saudi Arabia, means that STC is well placed to capture share in cloud services, in turn growing revenue, forming deeper and more loyal relationships, and reaching new market segments.

"As well as lowering power costs and operational expenses, we can increase support for virtual desktops and mission-critical applications. This is also great news for our customers who can now take advantage of the virtualized data center to lower their costs and carbon footprint," says Al Haider. The super-efficient, unified-fabric-ready data center will enable public sector organizations, enterprises, and small businesses to transform faster, using outsourced and pay-as-you-go IT models. It also provides all the benefits of 10 Gigabit Ethernet networking but, compared to a traditional facility, occupies about 33 percent less space with the potential for making further savings on cooling, power, and infrastructure.

Data center management has also been greatly simplified. Service levels are driven by predictable performance and ease of operations. In turn, this reduces time for provisioning and fault resolution, while also enabling STC to focus its resources on core competencies, such as providing centralized application provisioning, patch management, monitoring, and support.

Looking ahead, the new virtualized data center will help to speed up the introduction of other managed services. These services include platform-as-a-service, providing support for all stages of the application lifecycle: design, development, testing, and deployment. In addition, STC is currently considering introducing usage-based models for TelePresence-as-a-service, Unified Communications-as-a-service, and smart building solutions.

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Nawaf Al Shammari
Service Development Director, Enterprise Business Unit, STC

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Data Center please go **here**

To find out more about Cisco WebEx please **click here**

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