

Swiss Service Provider Scales New Heights

Customer Case Study



Cisco private cloud helps i-Community grow data center business by 40 percent, while making its operations more efficient

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: i-Community AG

Industry: IT services

Location: Switzerland, St. Moritz (GR) and Buchrain (LU)

Number of Employees: 16

Challenge

- Meet customer demand for outsourced cloud solutions
- Diversify business and achieve economies of scale

Solution

- Private cloud, built on Cisco UCS, fully managed and hosted by i-Community

Results

- 40 percent rise in data center revenues
- 70 percent server restoration time reduction, and threefold deployment time improvement
- 30 percent reduction in power consumption, and up to 75 percent reduction in cabling

Challenge

When it comes to selling IT services, a remote location need not be a barrier to growth. From its beginnings as a small IT store in the Swiss ski resort of St Moritz, i-Community has extended its reach nationally. Increasingly called upon to install corporate IT networks, drawing on Cisco® CCNA® accreditation, the company saw a growing need for data center services among customers ranging from hospitals to luxury hotels and public authorities.

Customer server rooms were traditionally maintained on site, but the harsh Alpine weather and blocked mountain passes often delayed delivery of spare parts. These factors gave i-Community the ideal opportunity to develop a cloud offering and provide customers with a fully-managed, outsourced solution. The challenge was delivering this potentially lucrative cloud service without incurring major costs or creating heavy administrative loads.

Solution

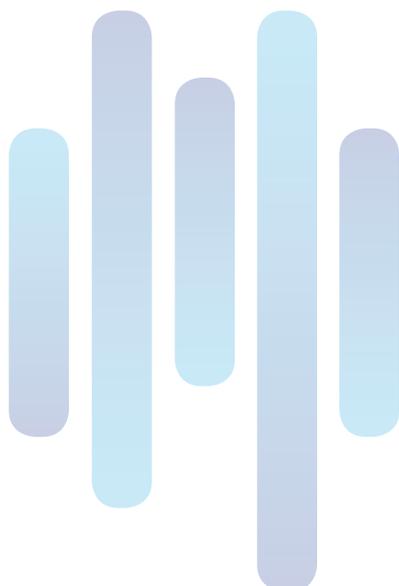
In 2010, i-Community acquired three Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®) B200 M2 Blade Servers. The company was particularly impressed with the memory capacity and reliability of UCS, not least because its existing servers from another vendor were experiencing problems. A further attraction was administrative simplicity. “Anybody can take simple steps with the UCS management software,” says Marco Duschletta, CTO at i-Community. “With our other blades, you have to plug in a Cisco module to interface with the network. So we thought: why not just buy Cisco?”

Having decided to move forward with Cisco UCS for hosted and managed data center operations, i-Community bought four B200 M3 Blades for customer use and another B200 M2 Blade to act as a hot spare. The Cisco UCS B200 M3 uses the power of the latest Intel® Xeon® E5-2600 series processor family, regarded as a CPU benchmark by i-Community.



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Marco Duschletta
CTO, Member of the Board
i-Community



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CTO, Member of the Board
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For networking, i-Community relies on Cisco Catalyst® 3750-X Series Switches, while Catalyst 4500-X Series Switches form a virtual switching system for the three UCS B200 M2 blades dedicated to internal systems. Elsewhere, the company has NetApp FAS3200 Series storage arrays and a VMware vCenter server virtualization and management system.

The whole system supports 162 virtual servers running applications such as Windows Server 2008 and 2012, Active Directory, Structured Query Language databases, Exchange servers and others servers with branch industry software solutions. Data is backed up to a disaster recovery data center. Around 75 percent of i-Community customers use thin client endpoints powered by Microsoft Terminal Services or Citrix XenDesktop.

Results

Cisco UCS has helped i-Community steadily increase its data center business. The proportion of revenues from data center services rose from ten to 50 percent between 2010 and 2013.

“After the initial implementation, we had one network problem, which actually turned out to be a broken cable,” says Duschletta. The experience compares favorably with i-Community’s previous server technology, which typically experienced one or two faults a year. UCS service profiles have made server deployment easier and about three times faster. While it has not been measured, application performance is also thought to have improved.

Meanwhile server restoration times are much quicker, taking about three minutes, compared to a previous delay of about 10 minutes, thanks to UCS 40Gbps connections. Power consumption has dropped by an estimated 30 percent, and cabling requirements have been cut from 80 cables per server farm to just 20 for a whole chassis. “You can save up to 75 percent on cabling,” Duschletta says. “Furthermore, we have much less hardware and it’s simpler and easier to manage. Without UCS, we would never be able to manage our current customer base with our company size. Coping with those numbers would simply be impossible.”

Customers of i-Community also appreciate Cisco UCS. In the case of Verein Movimento, it provided the ability to focus on its core business, which is working with disabled people. “With service from i-Community, that point is completely fulfilled,” says Reto Zampatti, CEO of Movimento. “The hosted server infrastructure ensures data security and availability, which is very important because it offers the tools users need to complete their daily work.”

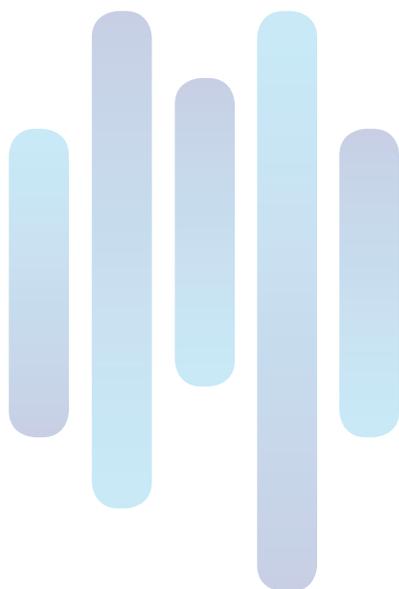
For Crystal Hotel, outsourcing its data center requirements to i-Community revealed additional benefits. “There is not much IT left in-house now, so we have more space in our server room and don’t need so much cooling equipment,” says Marc A. Kilchenmann, a director at Crystal Hotels and Restaurants. “Importantly, the infrastructure is high-performance and very reliable, which is exactly what people need to do their jobs.”



Verein Movimento



Crystal Hotel



Next Steps

Having settled on UCS as the basis for its growing hosted and managed cloud business, i-Community is now looking to consolidate its presence in the market with a new facility that will allow it to offer even greater levels of performance and availability.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study, go to:

www.cisco.com/go/cloud

www.cisco.com/go/ucs

www.cisco.com/go/catalyst

Product List

Data Center

- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)
 - Cisco UCS B200 M2 Blade Servers with Intel Xeon Processor E5-2600 Series
 - Cisco UCS B200 M3 Blade Servers with Intel Xeon Processor E5649 Series

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Catalyst 3750-X Series Switches

Applications

- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft Exchange
- Microsoft Terminal Services
- Microsoft Structured Query Language Server
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 and 2012
- VMware vCenter
- Citrix XenDesktop

Storage

- NetApp FAS3200 Series
- NetApp FAS2240 Series



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