CASE STUDY

EXP leverages iland, now 11:11 Systems, cloud to reduce costs and support business growth.

SOLUTION: IaaS

When SaaS provider EXP determined it needed a sound IT strategy to handle its growth, the company began investigating whether a move to the cloud would satisfy its needs both technically and economically. Even though iland, now 11:11 Systems, was EXP's existing hosting provider, EXP carried out extensive due diligence into a number of cloud providers to find the right one.

EXP's comprehensive software solutions help companies in a diverse group of industries effectively achieve goals in EHS, quality, sustainability, risk management, and other compliance areas. EXP offers open, flexible software solutions supporting a broad array of compliance functions.

EXP's software is being used at customer sites in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia/Pacific. It offers the software as both an onsite installation and as a software as a service (SaaS) model.

CHALLENGES

- Budget restrictions
- Lack of a scalable storage solution
- Time and labor-consuming updates

SOLUTION

- [11:11] Cloud (IaaS)

BENEFITS

- Cloud-driven cost reduction
- Flexible, customizable solution
- Elimination of hardware and maintenance

PROFILE

- Size: SMB
- Industry: Software

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> "One of the truly annoying things about software is that your customers don't have the time or resources to upgrade to the latest versions that include new features they asked for. Getting customers on the SaaS option fixes that and saves them time and resources. It is really that win-win we hear about."
>
> **Sree Velicheti, Founder and CIO at EXP Inc**

Accommodating the Requirements of Growth

Initially most customers want their data local; hosted software is less common. However, a majority of customers are actively looking for cost savings. More importantly they want their IT teams to focus on their core business and the operations that support them.

As important as compliance is to some customers, they realized it was not their core business and their IT teams could be better utilized elsewhere. This began driving customers to select a hosted model.

The change in customers' preference meant the company needed to grow its datacenter to meet escalating business demands. Historically the datacenter was hosted at a third-party site, but the company's team operated it.

EXP, like its customers, sought the best growth strategy, which resulted in lower costs and minimal impact to the company's IT team. It looked at hosted public cloud providers to determine whether its needs might be satisfied technically and economically.

As founder and CIO Sree Velicheti stated: "I was pleased our business was growing but investing in more personnel and direct management of the infrastructure seemed misplaced. I wanted to see whether the benefits of the cloud were real and if they were applicable to our business model."

Velicheti explained that the company's requirements were fairly predictable because it already had hosting experience. It sought a provider with a full service offering including hardware management, operations, upgrades, monitoring, and SLA tracking.

Most of all, the offering had to be less costly than the incumbent solution. EXP also required some customization ability if the situation warranted it, such as expanding memory on the servers. And it needed various storage solutions, including backing up data stored on the cloud to its own servers.

The company evaluated what service level agreements cloud providers would commit to and reviewed twelve months of operational records to ensure the provider could meet the SLAs. It also wanted the cloud provider to use VMware technology because it had used it for years. Velicheti knew VMware was stable and would allow EXP to update and patch its own SaaS software without issue.

"I asked for operational records to see if they could meet the SLAs. If they didn't blink when I asked, I knew they were a capable provider. Only teams who are in control track and manage that information constantly and can produce a report in minutes. That was the type of company we were looking for."

The Solution

The company discovered that its current hosting provider, [11:11], also offered cloud solutions.

The company researched and invited several providers to bid on its project. A thorough analysis indicated that [11:11] remained the top choice.

[11:11] provides a mix of dedicated and multi-tenant servers to provide the reliability and backup options the company wanted with solid cost savings.

As Velicheti says: “Blindly staying at [11:11] might have been easy but it would not have been the right business decision. However, our evaluation process found [11:11] to be the clear winner. We get to maintain the relationship we have been so happy with, and we know we have the best solution for our needs.”

Solid Return on Investment

Velicheti stated: “Right now our SaaS offering of one-quarter to one-third the cost of an onsite deployment is compelling to our customers.”

Velicheti explained that the company makes its margins on the software and services and passes through the infrastructure costs.

This allows it to be extremely competitive from a cost perspective. Another benefit of the cloud solution is it can keep all the software up to date, which results in much happier customers.

Additional business benefits include:

- Cheaper option than using the company’s in-house team to operate a hosted datacenter
- Increased focus on feature creation and client services
- Reduced headache about hardware purchases, maintenance, and accounting

Looking to the Future

Right now the company is focusing on its growing business. Possibly in the future, a second cloud location might be an option to facilitate international access.

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MODERNIZE PROTECT MANAGE

11:11 SYSTEMS

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