

Enabling Customers to Set Up Data Centers in Minutes



FASTWEB is making flexible cloud-based services highly affordable for major Italian and public sector customers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: FASTWEB

Industry: Telecommunications

Location: Italy

Number of Employees: 2500

Challenge

- Create new revenue streams
- Enhance customer retention
- Improve market positioning

Solution

- Cisco Unified Data Center architecture, including Cisco Intelligent Automation for Cloud, Cisco Unified Computing System servers, and Cisco Nexus switching

Results

- Enterprise organizations can access services that were out of reach, and realize savings of up to 50 percent
- Customers can set up and configure data center capacity in minutes
- Entire cloud business launched with minimal server racks

Challenge

FASTWEB is a leading telecommunications provider in Italy. It offers advanced services to residential customers and business segments including public authorities, large companies, small and medium enterprises, professionals, sohos, universities and research institutions. Fully owned by Swisscom, Switzerland's leading service provider, it is also one of Italy's top fiber-to-the-home and fiber-to-the-cabinet suppliers.

Competitive pressures and changing customer needs mean that the traditional FASTWEB telecoms business is becoming increasingly competitive, making new value-added services vital for the company.

One promising area is the provision of cloud-based services to Italy's enterprise market. Italian entrepreneurs have a growing need for IT solutions, but frequently lack in-house resources to develop and support these. So FASTWEB planned a range of services to seize the opportunity.

Solution

FASTWEB realized that improved customer experience, end-to-end control, and good margins would be easier to achieve if it built its own cloud service delivery solution. With Cisco Nexus® switching technologies already installed in its primary data center, the company decided to adopt Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®) B200 Blade Servers as its cloud offering foundation.

"We chose UCS because of its performance, reliability, and smooth integration with other stack components," says Mirko Santocono, enterprise value added services product manager at FASTWEB.



“Agility and reliability differentiate our company in the market. Delivering cloud over our Cisco platform helps us stand out and provides a flexible pricing model.”

Marco Pennarola
Head of Enterprise Marketing
FASTWEB

For data center switching, FASTWEB relies on a core of Cisco Nexus 5596 and 1000V Series Switches. The latter extends intelligence from the network edge to the hypervisor and virtual machines. “This gives us the ability to easily configure networking within a multi-tenant cloud environment,” says Santocono.

Infrastructure integration into a cloud management platform was key for FASTWEB and the unified Cisco approach across compute, fabric, and management made it a clear choice.

In fact the Cisco cloud solution, Intelligent Automation for Cloud (IAC), scored the highest among choices for openness and flexibility. Cisco IAC was also well rated for ease of use by both users and administrators with role-based access to manage the entire cloud service lifecycle from a single management console. Services can be rapidly built or modified without deep technical skills, accelerating go-to-market for new services and offerings.

The solution was first implemented in the FASTWEB purpose-built data center in Milan, and the value of Cisco IAC quickly became apparent. Cisco Intelligent Automation for Cloud offers ready-to-use ITaaS (IT-as-a-service), such as ‘provision a new virtual data center’ that can be customized to fit different business requirements.

Santocono says: “It’s also easy to create brand new services when you need them, unlike some other cloud orchestration platforms that are pretty rigid. With the Cisco portal, catalog, and automation tools customers can set up their own virtual data centers in just a few clicks.”

Cisco Services helped FASTWEB customize the Cisco IAC implementation in order to deliver a distinctive proposition in the market made up of six different cloud-based service offerings:

- FASTcloud vServer, a virtual server and core public cloud offering
- FASTcloud vPrivate DC, a highly customizable virtual private cloud for building up full data center services
- FASTcloud Full Private, an entirely dedicated cloud infrastructure for single enterprises
- FASTcloud DR, delivering disaster recovery as a service (DRaaS)
- FASTcloud Backup, a flexible and reliable cloud backup service
- FASTcloud Storage, for delivering storage space and sync-and-share services in the cloud

The FASTWEB investment in cloud infrastructure and competences has resulted in a best-in-class offering that really transfers tangible benefits to enterprises in the Italian market. FASTcloud is an end-to-end managed solution delivering computing resources and software platforms through the FASTWEB network, within a secure and highly efficient environment.

Results

With FASTWEB cloud services, enterprises can start up new business applications very quickly and shape their IT resource expenditures in accordance with real utilization needs. Thanks to experienced IT consultants and engineers, FASTWEB is also able to provide customized solutions, especially in hybrid and federated cloud scenarios where the integration of infrastructure is a key factor.

Tino Bonalumi, head of presale at FASTWEB, says: “To ensure an excellent end-to-end service we have invested in infrastructures as well as in skills, creating a business competence center staffed by a team of experts who manage and support customers from the solution design to the implementation and subsequent management. This has allowed us to realize hybrid-cloud and disaster recovery/business continuity solutions. The cloud is often a gateway for complex IT projects.”

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The Cisco technology has been critical in helping FASTWEB provide a cloud-based service within which customers can set up and configure an entire virtual data center in just a few minutes. “The portal is a vital element in the cloud stack,” says Santocono. “What Cisco offers is the automation and orchestration of cloud, strongly integrated with the network, which is quite complex. Nobody right now in the Italian market can do that.”

With the Cisco IAC intuitive user interface, customers may choose among different IaaS and platform-as-a-service (PaaS) offers thanks to an integrated catalog, and then simply deploy the services desired. These include network elements such as network firewalls, load balancers, and so on. Role-based access allows administrators to decide the actions that customers can complete, versus actions that are reserved for administrators.

With strong growth forecasted, scalability is very important to FASTWEB. “Cisco is aligned with our expectations. It’s easy to expand capacity by adding new UCS blades. Visibility is also key. We operate a multi-tenant environment so it’s important to track the capacity used by each customer,” Santocono says

FASTWEB also appreciates the fact that UCS has limited requirements in terms of rack space, power consumption, and cabling. “Our Cisco cloud solution has helped cut overall data center costs,” says Santocono. “We have reduced the space we need with our entire cloud infrastructure consuming just a few racks, which is pretty impressive.” The Cisco end-to-end architecture delivers built-in resilience and redundancy, which allows FASTWEB to offer end-to-end service level agreements.

The Cisco unified cloud solution is allowing FASTWEB to deliver significant value and savings to its customers. Estimates suggest that customers can reduce IT expenditures by around 50 percent over three years utilizing FASTWEB services when compared to maintaining their own on-premise infrastructure.

Some customers have even used the cloud service as a platform upon which to launch their own services, allowing them to focus on marketing and promotion aspects without having to bother with infrastructure issues.

The Cisco cloud solution has provided significant benefits to FASTWEB. Marco Pennarola, head of enterprise marketing at FASTWEB, says: “Agility and reliability differentiate our company in the market. Delivering cloud over our Cisco platform helps us stand out and provides a flexible and innovative pricing model.”

Next Steps

FASTWEB has plans to expand the number of data centers both in Milan and throughout Italy. This expansion will enable the company to launch new services such as PaaS and software-as-a-service. And while its current offerings are mainly directed at large enterprise customers, going forward the company plans to target other market segments, continuing to collaborate with Cisco on joint go-to-market strategy.

Pennarola concludes: “Cloud infrastructure will be a key enabler of a new lifestyle and business transformation. We are seeing more and more medium and large companies adopting cloud technology, in both private and public sectors. We believe that awareness of this new technology will increase amongst smaller companies too, through an effective and reliable ecosystem model made up of innovative solutions from third parties delivered via the FASTWEB cloud.”





For More Information

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

www.cisco.com/go/iacloud

www.cisco.com/go/ucs

www.cisco.com/go/nexus

Product List

Data Center Solutions

- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)
 - Cisco UCS B200 Blade Servers

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Nexus 5000 Series Switches
- Cisco Nexus 1000V Series Virtual Switches

Management

- Cisco Intelligent Automation for Cloud

Services

- Cloud Implementation



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