Cloud and Telecom Operator Accelerates Next-Generation Revenue Streams

FlexPod helps Telindus fast-track profitable growth and bring enhanced cloud services to Luxembourg customers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Telindus

Industry: Service provider

Location: Luxembourg

Number of Employees: 360

Challenge
- Support business growth
- Improve scalability
- Reduce total cost of ownership

Solution
- FlexPod, providing delivery platform for infrastructure-as-a-service, desktop-as-a-service, cloud self-service, and communications-as-a-service offerings

Results
- Developed a 120-strong customer base in three years
- Supported doubling of year-on-year revenues
- Halved number of physical servers

Challenge

Telindus is a cloud and telecom operator, as well as a systems integrator. A subsidiary of Belgacom Group, the incumbent telecom provider in Belgium, Telindus Luxembourg is the leading ICT company in Luxembourg, with more than 5000 customers.

A Cisco® gold partner, Telindus began to see growing demand for infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) offerings. A few years ago, it sensed an opportunity to boost its Luxembourg-based business through the introduction of cloud services.

"Our customers were demanding more services versus pure infrastructure delivery," says Jacques Ruckert, Director of Products and Solutions at Telindus. "As a matter of fact, our customers wanted a fully outsourced IT service, including the infrastructure, delivered as a service." To take advantage of this opportunity, the company embarked on a five-year, EURO€20 million (US$27 million) investment program that included the creation of a service provider brand, Telindus Telecom.

In choosing an infrastructure platform for the Telindus Telecom cloud, the business was keen to find a platform that was simple to operate and maintain yet flexible enough to cater for a variety of customer requirements.

Telindus had been working with Cisco networking equipment and NetApp storage for many years, but had traditionally relied on another vendor for servers. Those three suppliers were used for the first Telindus Telecom cloud platform, but as demand took off, the platform quickly started to run out of capacity and became constrained by a lack of 10Gbps links.

The company realized that it needed to move to a simpler infrastructure and adopt blade server technology for dense computing consolidation. In 2013, with the data center already housing 50 physical servers and 600 virtual machines, Telindus issued a tender. "We were looking for a partner, not a vendor," says Ruckert. "It wasn't just a technical decision, but also a commercial choice. Cisco was the clear winner as a company with a proven track record of innovation, excellent sales support capabilities as well as a strong financial position."

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Jacques Ruckert
Director, Products and Solutions
Telindus

Solution

Telindus selected FlexPod, a pre-validated data center architecture comprising Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®) server technology, a 10Gbps Cisco Nexus® unified switching fabric, NetApp fabric-attached storage (FAS) storage, and VMware virtualization.

The FlexPod units purchased by Telindus are equipped with 25 UCS B200 M3 Series Blade Servers with Intel® Xeon® E5-2697 v2 processors, selected for their high density to improve consolidation ratios and reduce costs per virtual machine. The infrastructure also features three Nexus 2000 Series Fabric Extenders, a core of three Nexus 7010 Series Switches, a NetApp FAS3270 Series metro cluster, and a Cisco Nexus 1000V Series Switch for VMware vSphere. Cisco ASA 5585-X Series Next-Generation Firewalls make up one of the security layers used by the company.

Telindus bought four FlexPod units and deployed two each in its two Tier 4 data centers, one primary and one secondary. These data centers are located to the north and south of Luxembourg, about 24 miles (40 kilometers) apart in an active-active configuration.

Although Telindus carried out the deployment itself, Cisco Services provided a week's worth of data center implementation enablement services, featuring on-site engineering support to advise Telindus data center specialists on the specifics of setting up the FlexPod platform. For ongoing support, the units are covered by a four-year Cisco SMARTnet™ agreement, giving Telindus access to expert support engineers at the Cisco Technical Assistance Center, along with rapid hardware replacement options and proactive alerts.

The cloud infrastructure supports a range of products offered under the Telindus Telecom brand. So far, four product lines have been launched, comprising IaaS, desktop-as-a-service, cloud self-service, and communications-as-a-service. These support applications such as Oracle database software, Microsoft Office, and the Telindus own brand of salary and accounting packages. Multitenant unified communications services, meanwhile, are delivered using Cisco Unified Communications Manager on UCS.
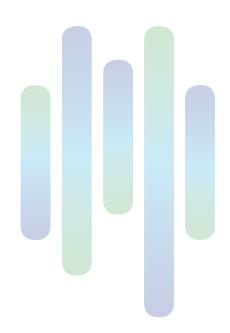
Results

Telindus was the first company to launch cloud services in Luxembourg and is widely recognized as a market leader, as evidenced by numerous awards. The underlying FlexPod infrastructure has played a significant role in enabling the company to meet its launch objective of doubling revenues every year, gaining around 120 customers in just two-and-a-half years.

The high performance and resilience of FlexPod allows Telindus to provide premium cloud services, which appeal to top-end customers. "We're not targeting the mass market," says Christian Haux, sales and marketing director at Telindus. "We aim to offer the right services at the right price."

Telindus Telecom customers benefit from being able to manage fewer IT suppliers in their data centers while enjoying high levels of operational efficiency from the Telindus cloud approach. The previous performance challenges have disappeared thanks to superior FlexPod storage performance, allowing Telindus customers to scale their consumption of cloud services to meet growing demands over time.

Although Telindus has not carried out a performance analysis, it's believed the superior capability of FlexPod's storage arrays is bound to have an effect. "It's all about NetApp," says Haux.

The service provider benefits, too, from simplified support, with just one number to call. "FlexPod is more integrated than a traditional data center infrastructure, which is better for us and for our customers," says Haux. "It has to be very stable, so we can offer high service level agreements."

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Sales and Marketing Director
Telindus

FlexPod is also able to provide better levels of consolidation than the previous Telindus data center platform. The company expects the number of physical servers to drop from 50 to 25. Moving to blade technology has thus helped reduce data center space requirements. "FlexPod also offers a better TCO," says Haux. "This is very important, as we are seeing price erosion in the cloud market, and we need to maintain margins on competitive prices while improving performance."

Next Steps

Telindus is currently running FlexPod alongside its previous data center equipment. However, the company has plans to move all the Telindus Telecom business onto FlexPod by 2015. In the meantime, the company is looking to streamline management by implementing an automated provisioning tool such as Cisco UCS Director.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study please go to: www.cisco.com/go/flexpod

Product List

Data Center Solutions
• FlexPod
  – Cisco UCS B200 M3 Series Blade Servers
  – VMware
  – NetApp FAS3270 Series storage array

Routing and Switching
• Cisco Nexus 7000 Series Switches
• Cisco Nexus 2000 Series Fabric Extenders
• Cisco Nexus 1000V Series Virtual Switches

Security
• Cisco ASA 5585-X Series Next-Generation Firewalls

Processors
• Intel Xeon E5-2697 v2 processors

Applications
• Oracle
• Microsoft Office
• Telindus own-brand HR and accounting packages
• Cisco Unified Communications Manager

Services
• Cisco SMARTnet
• Data center implementation support

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