VMWARE CASE STUDY

INDUSTRY
Cloud Vendor and Distributor

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
Johannesburg, South Africa

WEBSITE
www.cloudondemand.co.za

OBJECTIVE
Cloud on Demand needed a fully virtualised, cloud based solution that would enable the business to start with the provisioning and delivery of cloud Virtual Data Centre's (vDC) and SaaS solutions to a partner channel.

SOLUTION
The company was able to launch its business in less than three months, and has rolled out an SDDC where all hardware functions are managed in the software layer.

BUSINESS IMPACT
Cloud on Demand is making the IT reseller channel more relevant by enabling them to provide cloud services to their customers. It has also ensured that hardware complexity and cost is reduced and the skills associated to deploying hardware are minimal.

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Cloud On Demand

A business built in the cloud

Cloud vendor selects VMware as the basis of its SDDC

When cloud vendor and Hybrid Cloud enablement partner, Cloud on Demand, looked for a solution that would pave the way for its business and provide the basis for the cloud and hybrid cloud services it sought to provide customers, the company elected to invest in the VMware SDDC (software-defined data centre) as its technology of choice.

Cloud on Demand is a South African Cloud Vendor and Hybrid Cloud Enablement Partner offering a platform, complimentary applications and solutions to assist its partners and their customers with embracing the benefits of cloud technology easily and in the most cost effective manner.

Business model

"Our model is very different to others in the market, as we are in essence, a cloud distributor for the channel," states Jonathan Kropf, CEO at Cloud on Demand. "That said we are not an Internet Service provider that is now offering a hosted services, our entire business has been built from the ground up based on the premise that we will be delivering cloud services to customers through a cloud centric channel. So in short Cloud is not a product for us. Cloud is who we are."

The Cloud on Demand business model is entirely channel centric, providing services that enable and accelerate the customer's of its partners to embrace and sell cloud through a channel model. According to Kropf the basis of the model was built around the premise that these customers did not need to make the investment into "cloud infrastructure" themselves. That said the company also doesn't sell direct to the end user.

The technology framework

"When we started looking for a technology that would enable our business model, we started by evaluating a couple of open source and Linux based solutions as well as tech from other vendors, that is until we settled on VMware and its SDDC," adds Kropf.

"The key thing that made us look at the VMware service offering was that it was able to provide us with a solution that encompassed automation, billing and security. It was also a software-centric offering as opposed to a hardware intense one.

"We wanted an end to end solution where we didn't have to piece together or wrap solutions around each other. So in short we wanted one technology so that there would be no loopholes because we were relying on multiple technologies. We are of the opinion that when you piece multiple pieces of software together you can have gaps and vulnerabilities. We didn't want that," he adds.

After deciding on VMware as its technology foundation, the Cloud on Demand team began cementing its business around a selection of key cloud technologies from VMware. The portfolio of technologies it has drawn from to date include: the vCloud Suite; vCloud Premier; vCloud Director; vCops; vCentre; the base virtualisation technologies, VMware Charge Back; vShield (for security management with the addition of a Trend Micro layer on this); VMware View in the VDI environment; as well as Site Recovery Manager that allows customers to have DR sites that can tap into its environment.

Purpose built

A pre requisite for the company was according to Kropf, enablement and interoperability with the systems of customers, particularly when considering its hybrid cloud offering. He says that based on the fact that the majority of South African businesses have virtualised their businesses on VMware technologies, it was a logical step for the company to

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- vCloud Suite
- vCloud Premier
- vCloud Director
- vCenter Operations Manager
- vCenter Server
- vCenter Charge Back
- vCenter Site Recovery Manager
- vShield (for security management with the addition of a Trend Micro layer on this)
- VMware View in the VDI environment

deploy a technology that would offer users a sense of comfort.

"We really wanted a solution that could enable hybrid cloud services as opposed to public only. Based on the fact that VMware has already educated the market in this environment, we just needed to provide the link between systems, without having to rehash the cloud sales pitch," adds Kropf.

Time frames

After a period of selection and planning the company began rolling out the VMware stack in October 2012 and officially went live in January 2013 to the partner channel. According to the team the process went much quicker and more seamlessly than what they thought it would. The entire roll out lasted only three weeks, after which the technical teams began tweaking the system as well as migrating pilot customers.

"The best thing about the deployment of the SDDC was the fact that we could virtualise the network as well as the security. The VMware SDDC solution allowed us to ensure that the physical layer was completely irrelevant," states Kropf. "At Cloud on Demand it doesn't matter what brand of hardware we have underneath the services, what we do have is an application based environment and a hungry animal that we feed more memory, hardware and processes as it grows."

Deriving the benefit

Immediate benefits of electing to roll out a VMware SDDC have been the ability to negate the need for large masses of technical expertise as well as associated training. The company is now also entirely virtualised, right down to the networking layer, meaning it doesn't need to call upon costly vendor based resources. Instead it only needs to tap into the VMware skills set on occasion.

"A huge benefit for us is that we have an immediate addressable market. Using the VMware technologies we have been instantly accepted in the market, without having to now educate and court them. This also extends to the training of our reseller base, who are already comfortable with the VMware technologies," says Kropf.

Other benefits for the business has been the efficiency it has managed to achieve from a billing perspective and that its services are hardware agnostic. The adoption of the SDDC technologies has also shortened the time to market for Cloud on Demand and provided significant reductions in the total cost of ownership.

Complimentary products the company has deployed in its environment include Veeam and Trend Micro solutions, both of which have proven partnerships and integration capabilities with VMware.

The service offering

"Based on our business model, our partners are able to provide a cloud business in a box, IaaS and a variety of packaged cloud solutions, as well as pitch themselves as a hybrid cloud implementer," says Kropf.

Today the Cloud on Demand business allows customers to move some of their computing services into the cloud, safe in the knowledge that they are using best of breed technologies. The services its partners are now able to offer their customers include: IaaS; hosted software solutions; Email; Backup; IT Service Management; Hosted Desktops; and Cloud Consulting.

"We simplify cloud technologies through our distribution network which has in turn assisted a channel, that is as a result of cloud, grappling with where they fit in and what their identity is, more relevant.

"If we had decided to launch two years ago we probably would have spent double on the systems. With the VMware SDDC our switching environment, network, firewall and overall hardware infrastructure has cost a fraction of what it could have. The brain and logic of our entire business sits in our SDDC and we don't have to rely on hardware such as complex routers and switches, that cost millions," ends Kropf.

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