



## Node Africa leads Africa to be a 'Cloud First' continent – deploying a greenfield data centre infrastructure in six weeks

### CUSTOMER

Node Africa

### WEB SITE

[www.nodeafrica.com](http://www.nodeafrica.com)

### INDUSTRY

Information Technology –  
Service Provider

### LOCATION

Nairobi, Kenya

### KEY CHALLENGES

- Deploy data centre in <two months
- Create hybrid offering
- Reduce bandwidth challenges

### SOLUTION

Deploying the vCloud Architecture Toolkit, a scalable cloud infrastructure was built in six weeks, utilising vSphere, vCloud Director and NSX. Leveraging the vCAN model customers only pay for what they use.

### BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Commodity networking equipment
- Replication under six hours
- Reduced latency for service providers

When cloud service provider and cloud broker Node Africa decided to set up shop in Kenya, the company's executive team turned to a rich personal history with VMware and the company's vCloud Air Network (vCAN) programme to build its business and data centre. Within the vCAN programme Node Africa is making use of the full VMware cloud provider stack including products such as vSphere, vCloud Director and NSX to provide enterprise class cloud services.

Launched early 2016, Node Africa provides its customers with bespoke cloud infrastructure as well as services that extend to consulting, design, build and deployment of complex solutions. Its team is made up of IT specialists who have extensive experience in running critical IT systems in Kenya and the rest of Africa, systems that are highly available and highly secure.

### The Challenge

"Node Africa's business model is relatively new to Africa as there are very few hybrid to public cloud providers who are able to offer customers their own space in a public cloud, or combine private and public clouds into a hybrid offering," says Phares Kariuki, CEO at Node Africa.

But the company didn't only elect to develop and deploy its systems on VMware. It signed up as a vCloud Air Network (vCAN) partner, leveraging the service provider friendly model of securing product, as well as providing it the ability to offer its own customers access to VMware infrastructure on a month-by-month and pay-as-you-use and pay-as-you-grow subscription basis. The partnership not only allows Node Africa to scale as it grows, but also allows it to provide its clients the workload mobility needed to transact from private to public clouds and back again, in a true hybrid cloud model. In what can only be described as a truly flexible and agile means.

"When we looked into launching the business I turned to my decade long

experience of working with VMware and decided that it would be the perfect solution on which to build the fabric of Node Africa," says Kariuki

Additionally, because of bandwidth constraints on the African continent, customers require a low latency environment; a challenge that it hoped to reduce to milliseconds with the use of the VMware solution stack. By achieving this it would also be able to rapidly roll out and offer solutions such as backup-as-a-service, infrastructure-as-a-service, platform-as-a-service, as well as multi vendor hybrid cloud offerings, purely because of the availability of its platform.

### The Solution

Purchasing standard server and commodity networking hardware as the premise of its data centre, Node Africa then rolled out the full VMware vCloud Platform solution, leveraging the capabilities of the vSphere hypervisor and vCloud Director, as well as NSX.

Through the use of VMware vCloud Director Node Africa has been able to build differentiated cloud services that are inherently hybrid-aware. "This has

## VMWARE CASE STUDY

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Phares Kariuki, CEO at Node Africa



### VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware vCloud Air Network - Partnership
- VMware vCloud Director
- VMware vSphere
- VMware NSX
- VMware vCloud Architecture Toolkits (vCAT)

***“We were able to roll out a small hardware footprint and have a system that is superior to any of our nearest competitors, which we use to show customers how they can leverage it to review their own internal IT costs.”***

Phares Kariuki, CEO at Node Africa

allowed our enterprise-class users who already have VMware installed in their own data centre and want to make use of our cloud environment, to seamlessly push their own virtual machines and their cloud business into our cloud – while still taking advantage of complete workload mobility,” adds Kariuki.

Furthermore the company also elected to deploy VMware NSX to give it the granular security policies it needed to secure the environment through the use of the micro-segmentation capabilities of the solution, as well as the ability to build billing policies for clients that would integrate with its own billing policies, furthermore giving the business the ability to leverage a true virtualised network infrastructure.

Node Africa’s mission statement is to ‘help organisations recoup their costs on their IT infrastructure, increase agility whilst mitigating the risk that comes with IT infrastructure.’ Its team achieves this by helping customers execute on their vision, while maintaining, monitoring and running customer infrastructure with nominal input from internal teams, allowing a business to focus on what it wants from IT; data.” Factors the team feels they are now able to achieve through the deployment of the VMware environment.

### Business Results & Benefits

“The amount of money we have saved on networking equipment, as a result of using NSX as the basis of our network, has been amazing. We saved \$10,000 on just our initial network infrastructure investment, that’s big for a greenfield start-up. You can achieve so much more with NSX than traditional network vendors,” mentions Kariuki.

By ‘following best practices’ contained within the vCloud Architecture Toolkits (vCAT), the entire secure, multi-tenanted system took a mere six weeks to roll out by Node Africa’s three internal VMware certified professionals.

By using VMware in its data centre Node Africa can offer the local (Kenyan) VMware installed base a cloud environment that seamlessly integrates with their own systems, integrates with multiple vendor offerings, and for which they only pay for what they use

and consume. As a result it very quickly signed up an initial six customers with very little marketing effort.”

“A by-product of our decision, especially around the use of NSX, has been the hardware savings we have leveraged by purchasing commodity-networking equipment. In short we were able to roll out a small hardware footprint and have a system that is superior to any of our nearest competitors, which we use to show customers how they can leverage it to review their own internal IT costs,” says Kariuki.

With vCloud, Node Africa is also able to ascertain when its systems are approaching capacity, enabling it to acquire additional hardware through suppliers and then scale the system out quickly and easily.

The biggest benefit experienced by Node Africa’s own partners is the interoperability provided to customers who already run VMware in their own systems. “For customers replicating to our platform it is a simple point and click process. It takes only six hours to deploy them on our platform and it is incredibly efficient to roll out a disaster recovery or cloud platform,” states Kariuki.

### Looking Ahead

In just three months after opening its virtual doors, Node Africa has 21 customers that are either signed on or are trying out its service and, according to Kariuki, to date every customer who has merely opted to try its service has signed on.

“Working with the VMware team has been amazing, they really understand the cloud space and have the local, Pan African and global resources we needed,” adds Kariuki.

