

Hyperconverged Infrastructure Implementation

An Airline's HCI Pilot Lands the IT Infrastructure Back at Home on Time

Today's airlines rely on their data center infrastructure to power critical IT systems – from ticketing to reservations to websites, to name just a few. So, when one U.S. carrier went looking for ways to get better performance and availability from this critical infrastructure, we proposed a hyperconverged solution that would deliver high availability, increase control and performance, and cost the company less than its existing outsourced data center infrastructure. After running a Hyperconverged Infrastructure pilot from Zones and Nutanix and experiencing the solution's performance and support in part of its VDI environment, the airline committed to a full VDI deployment – the first step in the company's plan to bring more IT infrastructure back in-house for greater control, uptime, and savings.



Airline customer turned in for workplace modernization projects to put forward a data center solution.



Identified the prioritized workloads that should be considered for moving the hyperconverged platform and start off a small virtual desktop infrastructure.



Now the client has a highly available environment to support flight operations, tickets, and reservation systems.



CHALLENGE

- Outages were costing the client a tremendous amount of money they couldn't afford to lose.
- The same outages were causing the client to lose control of critical IT systems at inopportune times.
- Expensive managed services in third party colocation data center.



SOLUTION

- Zones designed and implemented a modern Hyperconverged Infrastructure (HCI) pilot running Nutanix so the client could see potential performance increases.
- Zones held a series of mindshare sessions designed to bring the client's team members up to speed on the new solution, including best practices and advice for overcoming potential challenges.



RESULTS

- The new HCI solution provided the client with day one savings of \$5.5 million.
- The client is experiencing increased control, improved uptime, and proactive support.
- The client estimates the new solution has saved them over \$1 million compared to their previous solution.
- Once the benefits of the HCI solution were apparent, the client committed to a full VDI deployment.

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THE CHALLENGE

For years, an airline customer turned to Zones for occasional support on workplace modernization projects. But when the airline experienced performance and availability issues in its outsourced data centers, the Zones team put forward a data center solution to enable them to transform their data center.

THE SOLUTION

Knowing the airline's issues and objectives, the Zones Account Team, including our technical experts, proposed a Hyperconverged Infrastructure solution. The carrier's IT team was determined to move their infrastructure in-house to increase availability and performance and bring greater scalability and ease of management to its environment.

A key driver influencing the airline's consideration of an in-house hyperconverged solution was an outage they experienced with their colocation partner that cost them several million dollars from just 20 minutes of systems-wide downtime.

In addition to technical conversations, the Zones team shared some "real world" perspective on best practices they developed and speed bumps to be avoided. After that conversation, the airline's IT team decided to move ahead.

Zones worked closely with the Nutanix team to identify a prioritized list of workloads the airline should consider moving to the hyperconverged platform. We started out with a small virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) proof-of-concept because it would enable the airline's IT leaders to understand what support would look like and what the modeling would be going forward.

Very quickly, the VDI pilot demonstrated Hyperconverged Infrastructure's value in terms of performance, scalability, and savings.

THE RESULTS

After experiencing the performance of Hyperconverged Infrastructure first-hand, the airline developed a plan for adding to their Hyperconverged environment, beginning with a full VDI deployment across the company using Citrix's XenDesktop. Again, the airline's IT team was impressed. The solution scaled perfectly and required very little management as they regained the performance and availability needed within their own environment.

Now they have a highly available environment for specific workloads that supports flight operations, tickets and reservation systems including PCI compliance, and other systems. Best of all, on day one it provided maintenance and management savings of \$5.5 million over their previous solution.

A critical factor was the support provided by Nutanix. One Saturday evening, the carrier's IT manager received a call from Nutanix about a system issue. Of course, he expected he would have to rally his team and head to the office to deal with it. Instead he was told that the failure had not yet occurred but would likely occur in the future. Even better, Nutanix had dispatched a replacement and an engineer to install it. The call was simply a heads-up. The issue was resolved by midnight without disrupting anyone's weekend.

The initial success with a hyperconverged environment has led to more projects including replacement of a legacy backup system that was very expensive to maintain. In partnership with Nutanix, Citrix, and Rubrik, Zones is continuing to bring the airline's outsourced infrastructure back under their own control and management.

This move to hyperconverged met all of the airline's operational and financial goals. In fact, for every block of Hyperconverged Infrastructure they deploy, the company estimates up to \$1 million in savings over their previous environment. And with approximately 35 blocks deployed to date, the total savings is truly significant.

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