Hawksford builds a launchpad for major international growth

HPE Composable Infrastructure enables growth for financial services company

The ambitions of international financial services company, Hawksford, required the very latest infrastructure platform. HPE Synergy and HPE 3PAR have combined to underpin a major refresh of business processes and are providing a powerful platform for future growth.

Challenge

Need to meet growing business demand

Despite global political and economic conditions, the financial services industry is constantly growing and new technology is continuously re-engineering the processes that support this growth. Business models are being disrupted and re-shaped, and financial service providers are seeking ever faster and more flexible infrastructures to power transformation and growth.

Finding that legacy systems will no longer meet current or future business demands, firms are facing a fundamental re-think in how they deliver IT and one of those is Hawksford.
“HPE Synergy is an absolutely key infrastructure that will help support the ongoing growth of our organization. It has taken us to the next level of business-critical IT services and allows our teams to focus on the key business ambitions and client needs.”

– Matthew Wilkinson, director of Global Operations, Hawksford

Headquartered in Jersey, with offices in Singapore, Hong Kong, and China, Hawksford offers financial management advice and administers trusts for both private individuals and corporations in over 115 countries.

Hawksford has an IT team of ten people and also employs several others to deliver services such as business intelligence. The team currently has 200 staff in Jersey and a further 200 staff in Asia, following the acquisition of People & Projects Ltd (P&P) in June 2018. The main data center is in the Channel Islands with data replicated to a disaster recovery co-location site. The data center in Asia is served by a private cloud infrastructure replicated to a data center in the Channel Islands.

“One of the key problems was some of our legacy infrastructure, which included HPE c3000 and c7000 blade enclosures and an HPE LeftHand SAN were five years old,” says Peter Le Maistre, assistant manager, Global Infrastructure for Hawksford. “So, support had ended, and we had been using third party companies to keep the servers and SAN running.

“We are looking to upgrade various applications and our desktop environment, and the infrastructure was becoming more and more limiting both in terms of functionality and performance for our growth ambitions.”

Hawksford also faced other challenges. While it had considered cloud delivery, regulatory requirements in some countries restricted where data could be held. Also, many clients wanted to know exactly where their data was, rather than have it in a public cloud infrastructure. Two options were left; either build a new infrastructure or use a private cloud. Calculations showed that running a private cloud out of the operating budget was not financially favorable and that it was more cost-effective to spend the money on internal systems and then write the investment off over a number of years.

Solution

New composable infrastructure

Hawksford considered two main vendors and engaged consultants to assist with the decision. “We looked at what our requirements were, both in terms of potential expansion of the business and how we want to extend globally,” explains Le Maistre. “Our goal was a solution that could provide us with the best service along with the functionality and growth we were looking for. We worked extremely closely with local partner Logicalis and Hewlett Packard Enterprise and at the end of the day, HPE Composable Infrastructure, delivered through HPE Synergy and HPE 3PAR, met our financial and operational criteria.”
Local consultants implemented the new environment which consists of two HPE Synergy 12000 frames each with five HPE Synergy 480 Gen9 compute modules. Storage is provided by two HPE 3PAR 8200 2-node hybrid arrays with 12 x 1.92 TB Solid State Drives (SSDs) and in addition to start-up services, the environment is covered by an HPE Proactive Care contract delivered by HPE Pointnext. The HPE Synergy compute modules run two Microsoft® SQL servers as a cluster and are also used as VMware® hosts for the rest of the virtual infrastructure.

With one frame located at each Hawksford data center, HPE Synergy brings compute, network and storage infrastructures together as a single platform with integrated management of these fluid resource pools through a single API. It’s software-defined from the bottom up and allows users to program infrastructure as code without the need for a lot of different APIs.

“We chose the HPE Synergy composable infrastructure because of the expandability,” says Le Maistre. “As we look to grow the business, we wanted something that would expand with us and we can easily add additional compute modules to the HPE Synergy enclosures.”

Hawksford manages its compute provisioning with HPE OneView and its built-in infrastructure automation engine designed with software intelligence. HPE OneView streamlines provisioning and lifecycle management across compute, storage and fabric enabling. Hawksford achieves efficient management with HPE OneView which enables it to control resources programmatically through a unified API.

“We decided on HPE Proactive Care because this is a critical environment that we rely on very heavily. Our clients demand the best and we are committed to delivering exceptional service, so uptime is crucial. We need to make sure we have insurance policies like HPE Proactive Care to help prevent problems, leverage 24x7 monitoring, pre-failure alerts, rapid diagnosis, automatic call logging, and parts dispatch for hardware support and to help avoid outages. Although we can handle any immediate problems with the replication, we don’t want to be in that situation for very long.”

**Benefit**

**Basis for growth**

Hawksford has already seen significant improvements and efficiencies in BAU activities and in the time taken to run routine financial reports. However, its main emphasis is on the wider strategic benefits that HPE Synergy and HPE 3PAR will bring to the company.
**Case study**

**Hawksford**

**Industry**

**Financial Services**

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### Customer at a glance

**Hardware**

- HPE Synergy 12000 frames
- HPE Synergy 480 Gen9 compute modules
- HPE 3PAR 8200 2-node hybrid arrays

**HPE Pointnext services**

- HPE Startup Services
- HPE Proactive Care Service

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“We have built a whole new desktop environment. We've upgraded our database servers with a new SQL cluster and we have also built a whole new domain infrastructure,” says La Maistre. “Before we had two very separate infrastructures, one for the Channel Islands and the other for servicing the Asia offices. The idea is to have a new global active directory infrastructure that will bring everything together under one management. These form part of a very major change in terms of how the business is structuring itself and that is being supported by HPE Synergy.”

The company is actively looking to grow, both organically and through acquisitions and believes that HPE Synergy will enable it to respond to additional business requirements more rapidly with the capacity to grow in line with demand. Hawksford has also seen budgetary benefits from opting for capital expenditure rather than having a cloud service affecting its operational budget.

“We have achieved the performance increase that we wanted to see. Initial testing has shown that the performance of HPE Synergy is significantly better than our legacy infrastructure,” adds Matthew Wilkinson, director of Global Operations, Hawksford.

Synergy’s high-performance levels are achieved with the latest Intel® processors including Intel® Xeon® Scalable 6100 series, Intel Xeon Scalable 5100 series and Intel Xeon Scalable 3100 series delivering speeds of 3.6 GHz.

“We like the fact that the infrastructure gives us fiber channel communication back to the SAN and the way the networking is structured when you’re scaling up to multiple HPE Synergy enclosures. It’s taken us up to the next level,” adds Wilkinson.

The choice of HPE 3PAR has fulfilled Hawksford's need for rapid real-time replication between data centers and has also delivered the advantages of swift Solid State Drives (SSD), deduplication and persistence.

As Hawksford restructures itself to increase current efficiency and underpin future expansion, it’s moving forward with the confidence of an agile, powerful and scalable technology base.

Learn more at [hpe.com/synergy](http://hpe.com/synergy)