The Sourcing Company achieves growth with hybrid cloud

HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack delivers Azure services from the data center

Objective
Create a hybrid cloud environment that meets clients’ data sovereignty needs while enabling rapid growth

Approach
Built on trusted HPE infrastructure, the HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack hybrid cloud solution enables the deployment of Azure-consistent services from a customer’s data center

IT matters
- HPE expertise ensured robust hybrid cloud solution running in just a week
- Standardization using templates accelerates onboarding of new clients
- Cuts time required for software updates from a month to days
- 90% faster software updates when using Azure Stack

Business matters
- Offers familiar Azure interface in a regulatory compliant environment
- Reduces time-to-market, enabling rapid expansion into new markets
- Trusted HPE infrastructure and deep HPE expertise bring peace of mind

Challenge

Regulatory compliance in an online world
Today’s organizations are increasingly moving to public cloud, but regulatory and other requirements require them to run some applications on-premises. To meet the needs of the organization, IT is relying on a hybrid cloud model that complements the flexibility and scalability of public clouds with the security and privacy of private clouds.

Having offered cloud solutions since 2007, Dutch cloud provider The Sourcing Company (TSC) understands this only too well. TSC provides its customers a multi-tenant cloud environment across data centers in the Netherlands, leveraging the Microsoft® public Azure Cloud to offer online workspace productivity tools, including Office 365.

To expand its service offerings to customers, in 2017 TSC introduced an online workspace for its legal clients called Magistra, where users could track time, create and share documents, maintain contacts and more. “Our Magistra portal combines Office 365 with lawyer software packages and in-house scripts,” reveals Ronald Verweij, CEO and founder of The Sourcing Company. “But regulatory requirements prevented us placing any business-critical or privacy-sensitive data or applications in the public cloud, limiting the full use of Magistra.”

To meet these regulatory requirements, TSC needed a hybrid cloud solution that would easily integrate with the Azure public cloud, while maintaining the regulatory requirements its clients demanded. To meet the demands of its legal customer base, TSC turned to Hewlett Packard Enterprise.
“While other vendors were struggling with their offerings, Hewlett Packard Enterprise had a stable Azure Stack solution ready to go. HPE had really thought through customer needs to deliver the best possible configuration and the best performance available.”

– Ronald Verweij, CEO and founder, The Sourcing Company

Solution

Leveraging private cloud benefits
Co-engineered by HPE and Microsoft, HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack is a hybrid cloud solution that enables organizations to run Azure-consistent services from their own data center. This would enable TSC to host its Magistra services on-premises to meet client requirements while, at the same time, continuing to run Azure public cloud services. Given that Azure and Azure Stack are API compatible, TSC can build applications once and deploy to either public Azure or Azure Stack on-premises and, thus, extending its service offerings.

With multiple configuration options available, TSC opted for an 8-node configuration with the ideal CPU and memory choices to meet exact workload requirements.

“HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack was the only stable Azure Stack solution, providing the broadest set of configuration options,” notes Verweij.

Flexible, comprehensive support

HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack is an integrated system that is delivered preconfigured and installed on-site at the customer location. This integrated solution combined with HPE expertise enabled TSC to have a system fully up and running within one week at colocation partner Interxion’s Amsterdam data center. “The network connections are critical to a hybrid cloud solution and the biggest installation challenge,” comments Verweij. “We watched how HPE set up them all up. It went really well.”

The HPE Proactive Care offered TSC an integrated set of reactive and proactive services to prevent problems before they occur, solve problems faster, and ensure TSC was always informed and in control. “HPE worked closely with us,” highlights Verweij. “They listened, discussed and answered our questions. Their knowledge was invaluable.”

The strong, long-standing partnership between HPE and Microsoft ensures a seamless solution for customers. Back-end support processes ensure TSC has a single point of contact for any questions that arise.
Benefits

Leveraging the best of both worlds at speed

Today, TSC is well positioned to offer its clients a fully-integrated solution that complements public Azure cloud with the benefits of private cloud. "HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack allowed us to develop Magistra as a single flexible solution with a consistent, familiar Azure interface," confirms Verweij. "Our legal clients access Office 365 in the public cloud while complying with security regulations by maintaining privacy-sensitive applications and data in a private cloud."

With speed a marker of competitive advantage for TSC, HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack is helping the company accelerate growth. TSC uses Azure Resource Manager (ARM) templates to define the deployment and configuration steps for Magistra. This allows the cloud provider to onboard new clients easily, consistently and quickly, in days instead of weeks. Compatible with both Azure cloud environments, the templates also allow TSC to put any elements of Magistra in either the public or private Azure-based cloud.

Adopting the hybrid cloud solution has also accelerated maintenance updates, as Verweij reveals: "With Azure Stack we completed an update from SharePoint 2013 to SharePoint 2016 in just a couple of days; before Stack, it took a month."

Verweij explains how the templates have also freed up resources while giving TSC peace of mind: "With Azure Stack templates, all the Magistra deployments are completely the same. Standardizing deployments not only saves us up to ten man-hours each week in managing the workspaces but when we update the template, we're quite sure it will work for everyone."
Customer at a glance

Solution
- HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack

HPE Pointnext services
- HPE Installation and Deployment Services
- HPE Proactive Care

Expanding into new markets

HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack has also accelerated TSC’s development cycles. The company can develop new solutions very cost efficiently by simply creating new templates, which is just a matter of filling in a form and waiting a few hours.

TSC is now building a version of Magistra for housing corporations and plans to build another for healthcare companies. “With HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack, we can add new functionality, and we can scale much faster,” comments Verweij. “Changes would have taken more than a month in our legacy environment, which meant we rarely added new functionality to our solutions.”

Verweij is confident about the future. The hybrid cloud solution means TSC can focus on expanding its service offerings and growing its overall business. “With HPE ProLiant for Microsoft Azure Stack, we have a platform that allows us to compete in new markets. It is helping us accelerate business growth.”

Learn more at hpe.com/cloud/azure-stack