

RIO CAN
REAL VISION, SOLID GROUND.

RioCan Real Estate Investment reduces rack space and cuts costs with HPE Synergy

Composable infrastructure enables company evolution

Industry

Financial services

Objective

Increase operating margins and reduce data center footprint without sacrificing quality

Approach

Implement HPE Synergy composable infrastructure as a flexible solution that allows for future platform growth

IT matters

- Reduces host servers from 14 to eight
- Lowers cost of hardware by \$180,000 over three years
- Eliminates a full rack in data center, and saves \$120,000 over three years in colocation costs through footprint reduction

Business matters

- Improves ability to perform complex business analytics required for decision making
- Alleviates workload from IT team to focus on other business-critical responsibilities
- Increases total capacity of disk memory and CPU by 30%, leaving 20% of the total space free, which is crucial as the company is on a growth trajectory



While RioCan Real Estate Investment looks to expand its real estate footprint in Canada, it also wants to reduce its technology footprint in the data center. When it came time to refresh its leased technology, RioCan turned to HPE, which implemented HPE Synergy composable infrastructure, saving the company \$300,000 over three years.

RioCan Real Estate Investment (RioCan) is in the midst of a corporate evolution. Canada's largest and most dependable real estate investment trust has, for over 25 years, leased, built, developed, partnered with and renovated properties housing the country's most recognizable retailers, grocery stores, movie theatres, restaurants, banks and gyms. With 6,200 tenants, 8.59 million square feet under development, and 45.1 million square feet of gross leasable area, RioCan is now expanding its focus to residential properties. Building communities, which includes the development of parks and urban mixed-use properties that combine residential, commercial, and/or office uses, is a shift in philosophy for the company, and with it comes a new way of looking at IT.



“We were looking to consolidate our hardware while reducing operational and capital costs. We’ve not only saved \$300,000 over three years, we’ve gained performance, high availability, reliability, and consistency, and simplified management. HPE Synergy is the way to go.”

– Nadeem Hussain, Assistant Vice President, Technical Services and Engineering, RioCan

HPE solution helps RioCan minimize downtime, improve information security, and reduce costs.



Higher quality at lower costs

In order to keep current and always have the most innovative and efficient technology in place, RioCan’s leadership sees the value in leasing hardware on three-year terms. When the time came to renew the lease on its HPE CS700x system—which itself had replaced an IBM PureFlex solution during a previous technology refresh—HPE proposed a solution that would be low-risk in terms of downtime and information security, could be deployed rapidly, and featured a single point of contact for support. It would also allow RioCan to maintain or increase its operating margins by lowering cost. In short, HPE presented a solution that would be a low capital expenditure without skimping on quality.

“Because we are changing our business perspective, our technology needs are also changing,” said Nadeem Hussain, Assistant Vice President, Technical Services and Engineering for RioCan. “Uptime and availability to business operations are very critical for us, but we also need more processing power for business analytics—all while increasing our ROI. HPE was able to analyze our needs and brought a composable infrastructure architectural approach to the table in response to our RFP.”

HPE Composable Infrastructure treats physical compute, storage and network devices as pools of resources or services using a powerful software-defined solution. These services are provisioned with what’s required for applications or

workloads to achieve optimal performance, and re-appropriated and allocated when another workload requires them. Having this kind of agility allows businesses to optimize their IT resources in a way that’s completely programmable.

The HPE Synergy solution

Understanding RioCan’s objective of reducing rack space at its colocation data center, HPE recommended **HPE Synergy composable infrastructure** in order to consolidate systems into a single frame. This would not only reduce rack space but also significantly decrease power usage, generating tangible cost savings.

Besides the HPE Synergy 12000 Frame and eight HPE Synergy 480 Gen9 Compute Modules, the HPE team proposed HPE 3PAR StoreServ 8200 for storage, and **HPE Pointnext Services** with three year 24x7 Proactive Care Support. The entire solution was brought together by **HPE OneView** for simple Hybrid IT management. This solution would provide the flexibility to operate data-centric applications while leveraging a cloud-centric solution, leaving room for future platform growth.

The proposed solution appealed to Hussain for many reasons, including the Intel® Xeon® processors in HPE Synergy. “We liked the partnership between HPE and Intel®,” says Hussain. “The joint commitment from HPE and Intel to provide best-of-breed hardware really put them ahead of the competition when it came to superior innovation.”





The flexibility offered by the composable infrastructure also impressed the team at RioCan, who appreciated that faster deployment would improve efficiencies across the organization.

A hurricane holdup

For Hussain and his team, timing was of the essence for implementation. With the company's fiscal year ending on December 31, all activities needed to freeze by December 10, which meant that if delivery didn't occur by mid-November, implementation and migration wouldn't occur until February of the new year.

For the HPE team, the timeline was realistic and doable—until Hurricane Harvey struck the southern U.S. Understanding the client's requirements and pressures to meet its internal migration deadline, the HPE team redirected the order to a distribution center in the Czech Republic and expedited shipments to RioCan's Markham, Ontario-based colocation data center.

"HPE Pointnext made sure the solution was pre-integrated, so that when our technology landed in the data center, it was pre-racked, stacked and cabled from the European distribution center," says Hussain. "We then had an HPE team on-site for five days to help our engineers with the installation and configuration process."

A training turning point

Migration was completed end-to-end within four weeks—and before the company's deadline—without any disruption or downtime to RioCan's internal users.

"We process rent on a monthly basis and we pay our vendors on a monthly basis, so we wanted to make sure that there were zero outages for our users," Hussain explains.

Hussain credits the training his team received prior to the hardware's arrival. "We arranged a two day session at HPE where my team had access to a sandbox environment. They got to go in, ask all the questions they had, touch and feel the technology, create machines, and move hardware around before ours ever arrived," he says. "When our hardware landed, and the HPE implementation team was on-site, I asked them to let my guys drive it and to watch over their shoulders. This gave my team the confidence to figure out the technology from soup to nuts in a safe environment. It added a lot of value for us."

HPE Synergy supplies significant savings

Because RioCan uses a colocation data center just outside of Toronto, reducing rack space meant reducing costs. HPE Synergy enabled the consolidation of systems into a single frame, reducing the need for rack servers from two full racks to a single one, and freeing up capital to reallocate elsewhere in the business.

"We used to run 14 physical host servers on the old system; now we run everything on eight and have eliminated a whole rack," says Hussain. "The cost savings for us are significant. We are saving \$40,000 a year by reducing our footprint, so over our three-year lease, that's a \$120,000 savings in colocation costs. That's a meaningful reduction."



“HPE Synergy allows for scaling as needed. As you grow, you can add more hardware, but if you need to scale down, HPE has a process to manage that, too.”

– Nadeem Hussain, Assistant Vice President, Technical Services and Engineering, RioCan

Customer at a glance

Solution

HPE Synergy composable infrastructure

Hardware

- HPE Synergy 12000 Frame
- HPE Synergy 480 Gen9 Compute Modules
- HPE 3PAR StoreServ 8200

Software

- HPE Proactive Care
- HPE Factory Express Services
- HPE Installation and Deployment Services
- HPE Technical Training

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Besides reducing physical space, the solution has increased the total capacity of disk memory and CPU by 30%, while leaving 20% of the total space free for future growth.

“If we want to increase more within the HPE Synergy frame, we know we can add two additional compute modules. This allows us to meet the needs we have today, but increase our capacity if we need to,” explains Hussain.

RioCan has also recognized a cost savings of \$60,000 per year on leasing costs, while gaining increased performance and flexibility. Over three years, the company will save \$180,000, bringing the total cost savings of the solution to \$300,000.

“We were looking to consolidate our hardware while reducing operational and capital costs,” says Hussain. “We’ve not only saved \$300,000 over three years, we’ve gained performance, high availability, reliability, and consistency, and simplified management. HPE Synergy is the way to go.”

Efficiency also improved for RioCan, with **HPE Synergy** speeding up tasks, which in turn saves the company time and enables growth, according to Hussain. With the company engaged in multiple large-scale projects across the country, speed and agility are critical for decision-making.

“It was important for us to improve iOS performance and processing power, and we got that with HPE Synergy. Jobs that used to run in an hour now run in 15 minutes, or even less, and what used to take 56 milliseconds has now dropped down to .04 milliseconds. It’s just phenomenal. That’s exactly the kind of performance improvement we were looking for.”

HPE Proactive Care provides peace of mind

Including HPE Proactive Care from HPE Pointnext into the solution provides both tangible and intangible benefits to Hussain and his team. He explains that having access to this IT operations service saves time for his internal team, which can focus on tasks that are beneficial to the business rather than on maintaining the hardware.

“HPE Proactive Care provides me with peace of mind. On a hardware level, it can predict if a disk isn’t performing well or if a failure will happen on a disk, and will alert the team to send hardware before anything goes wrong,” says Hussain. “I didn’t experience any downtime on my hardware in my previous HPE lease, and I don’t think I will this time, either.”

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