CUSTOMER
Comair Limited

WEB SITE
www.comair.co.za

INDUSTRY
Aviation and Travel

LOCATION
Johannesburg, South Africa (Head Office) / Operates within southern Africa

KEY CHALLENGES
- Provision infrastructure quickly
- Deploy applications effortlessly
- Create a better view of resources

SOLUTION
Deploying the RSAWEB Enterprise Cloud environment that is built on the VMware virtualisation stack, Comair now has an offsite VDC with a fully operational DR and UAT environment.

BUSINESS BENEFITS
- Logically isolated private environments
- Full resource visibility
- Boosted performance and superior functionality

Comair Limited

Comair chooses virtual data centre to help it deliver even more innovative and robust online services

When Southern African airline operator Comair identified the need to improve its online services to keep its edge in the fiercely competitive airline travel environment, it turned to VMware vCloud Air Network partner RSAWEB to help it develop an offsite, hosted Virtual Data Centre. Its demands of this environment included that it host the company's Disaster Recovery and User Acceptance Testing environment, as well as provide Comair with the flexibility it needs to scale, innovate and roll out infrastructure to the business on demand.

Southern African airline operator, Comair Limited was founded in 1946. In 1996 it signed a license agreement with British Airways Plc. to maintain and operate the latter's local and regional services in Southern Africa. In 2001 it launched South Africa's first low-fare airline, kulula.com. Apart from low cost flights, the kulula brand aims to deliver an easy, affordable and complete travel experience for all South Africans through a full service website that allows users to book flights as well as arrange car hire, hotel accommodation, book travel packages and more. kulula currently averages 35 000 unique visitors to its website per day and has 10 content uploaders whose fulltime job is to update website content.

The Challenge

As demand for online airline services increased over time, Comair made the strategic decision to leverage IT as an enabler for its business. It was the right decision at the right time; albeit one that required it to become ever more innovative and flexible in its online service offerings in order to retain this competitive advantage. Among the resulting new business imperatives was the need to be able to provision infrastructure more quickly, have a better view of its resources, and be able to roll out applications quickly and effortlessly. It was this business landscape that drove its IT department to investigate building an environment that would a) keep pace with its fast-moving, ever-changing business model, and b) afford it the flexibility to scale its services as demand arises.

Riaan Olivier, IT Operations Manager at Comair, explained that the search for a

solution to fulfil these needs revealed that the core elements necessary to support this vision included an offsite environment for the disaster recovery (DR) site and a user acceptance testing (UAT) environment that could scale quickly and give the company the performance it needed. He added, "It's important that Comair offer our customers a website experience that is out of this world while at the same time providing a cost saving to stakeholders. That is why we began investigating an offsite virtual solution to support this vision."

The Solution

A rigorous selection process whittled the field down to one viable solution for Comair. This solution was the Virtual Data Centre services offered by VMware vCloud Air Network partner RSAWEB's Enterprise Cloud solution. Enterprise Cloud is built on the VMware virtualisation stack including vSphere,

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware vCloud Director
- VMware vSphere
- VMware vCenter
- VMware vCloud Network and Security
- VMware NSX
- VMware vCloud Architecture Toolkits (vCAT)

vCenter Server, vCloud Network and Security (vCNS) and vCloud Director, and leverages the ability to build Virtual Data Centres with the help of the VMware vCloud Director. This, coupled with the fact that the solution allows it to build isolated virtual network environments through NSX as well as Enterprise Cloud's use of the highly fault-tolerant modular SolidFire storage, made the decision an easy one for Comair. SolidFire running VMware helps protect organisations against any kind of hardware failure, with guaranteed sustained IOPS (input/output per second) ensuring that performance and continuity is maintained and guaranteed.

Leveraging RSAWEB's Enterprise Cloud allows Comair to now enjoy all the benefits of owning a Virtual Data Centre (VDC), without any of the extensive technical and maintenance or the capital costs associated with on-premise solutions. This has moreover ensured that the company's online infrastructure is secure, lightning fast and infinitely scalable. The most important consideration for Comair however, is the automated disaster recovery provided by Enterprise Cloud, along with advanced networking and the ability of its internal IT team to lean on RSAWEB's team of Cloud experts for support. "The useful features and the disaster recovery options, the expert team RSAWEB employs and the advanced networking solutions RSAWEB can produce, due to the expert team, has incredible value to us at Comair," confirmed Olivier.

Business Results & Benefits

Adopting Enterprise Cloud enabled the various, distributed IT teams that comprise Comair's IT department to break out of the communication silos that existed previously and to communicate across functions instead. The Comair VDC moreover delivers full visibility of resources and has allowed IT to gain full control of the environment, providing the team with the ability to increase or decrease performance requirements of its online services on demand.

According to Olivier, using vCNS and vApps as part of its platform has also allowed the company to create logically isolated private environments across the business and today provides secure,

modular architecture to help protect it against any kind of hardware failure. This has of course been immensely beneficial to Comair's IT team. "Our IT Operations Team no longer worries about hardware upgrades or the performance of the VMs in our business, now they can simply focus on delivering virtual infrastructure for new innovative online projects needed by the business," he explained.

Through RSAWEB's Enterprise Cloud, Comair's websites and web applications have been able to tap into a multitude of additional business benefits, including boosted performance and superior functionality, which has led to notable increases in productivity and efficiency.

As regards to improvements to its online services, Comair now enjoys the benefit of being able to distribute the load between its owned infrastructure and RSAWEB's VMware VDC.

Looking Ahead

At present Comair's IT team has 10 people making daily use of the Enterprise Cloud services and plans to grow the environment's footprint based on the current success it is experiencing.

"Looking ahead, we plan to extend our use of the Enterprise Cloud infrastructure and service all our internal applications as well as external web services in the future," concluded Olivier.

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