

ING DIRECT accelerates innovation with one-click provisioning copies of the bank.

“We’ve cloud enabled our operating model and our IT strategy. It’s not just technology – wrapped around the solution is a whole set of new, more efficient work processes.”

Andrew Henderson, CIO, ING DIRECT Australia

With a large project backlog, the development and test infrastructure at ING DIRECT Australia could not meet the bank’s appetite for innovation. The bank’s in-house team of 49 developers and 18 testers needed a faster way to create new copies of the bank so they could accelerate time to market for new products and services. ING DIRECT worked collaboratively with systems integrator Dimension Data and technical experts from Microsoft, Cisco Systems and NetApp to design and deploy Bank in a Box, a private cloud solution that provides an integrated development and testing infrastructure that helps enable rapid provisioning of test environments.

The solution reduced the time associated with environment provisioning from three months to ten minutes, and has significantly reduced the testing backlog. With a cloud-enabled infrastructure aligned to its strategic priorities, the bank can now bring new products to market in a fraction of the time it used to take, securing a significant advantage over competitors.

ING DIRECT Australia

Industry:
Financial Services

Location:
Australia

Organisation size:
950

Organisation Profile

ING DIRECT is the world’s leading direct savings bank. Pioneering branchless banking in Australia in 1999, it’s now the country’s fifth largest mortgage lender with more than 1.5 million customers and A\$26 billion in deposits and A\$38 billion in mortgages.

Business Situation

ING DIRECT needed to speed up software environment provisioning to enable faster time to market for new products and services.

Solution

A private cloud infrastructure that can enable a new fully integrated testing and development architecture featuring Cisco hardware, NetApp storage, Microsoft software and professional services.

Benefits

- Established a cloud-enabled operating model
- Reduced time and cost of environment provisioning
- Enabled faster delivery of new projects
- Improved IT efficiency



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Business Needs

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“We’re a very innovative bank,” says Ben Issa, Head of IT Strategy, ING DIRECT Australia. “People were coming to our team asking us to test the impact of their ideas on our complex banking environment. We could only test so many projects at once, so we had long lead times. As a strategic priority, we needed to deliver innovation faster.”

With provisioning a single copy of the bank for testing taking eight people three months, ING DIRECT wanted to fully automate end-to-end provisioning, making staff more productive and focusing on the things that matter. “Our team is lean and efficient and very engaged, but our delivery model severely limited how many concurrent projects and changes we could manage,” says Andrew Henderson, CIO, ING DIRECT Australia. “We asked ourselves: How can we speed things up in a smart way?”

The ING DIRECT team had a vision: to provide a copy of the bank to anyone, at any time, for any purpose, at the lowest possible cost. This includes the full set of the bank’s applications, services, configurations and 5.5 terabytes of data.

“What we were looking for was a Bank in a Box, an environment that could quickly reproduce our own in all its complexity,” says Henderson.

“We recognised that getting this right would be an important part of transforming IT to a strategic enabler.”

Solution

After thoroughly evaluating vendor offerings, ING DIRECT developed a vision for Bank in a Box, a fully integrated solution that would help enable rapid provisioning of complete environments, accelerating time to market for new ideas.

“To help pinpoint the best solution across hardware, software and services, we engaged systems integrator Dimension Data and started talking to Microsoft, who were already a long-term strategic partner,” says Henderson.

“Our idea for the solution was unique, uniting technology from across the market to give us the capability to innovate and differentiate faster and better,” Issa says. “As far as we know, it was a world first.”

Developed collaboratively by NetApp, Cisco and Microsoft working with Dimension Data and ING DIRECT, the private cloud solution features data centre infrastructure built on Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS), Cisco Nexus switching and NetApp storage with Windows Server 2008 R2 Hyper-V virtualisation technology. It is fully integrated with the tool suite used by developers and testers at ING DIRECT, including Microsoft Visual Studio with Team Foundation Server and Virtual Lab Management, allowing them to provision environments easily as part of their workflow. Behind the scenes, Microsoft System Center helps orchestrate the provisioning processes for them.

This unique combination of technologies offers a highly automated and elastic private cloud infrastructure that helps enable

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Phil Goldie, Director, Server, Tools and Platform Strategy, Microsoft Australia

rapid provisioning of 5.5 terabytes of data. With this in place, ING DIRECT can abstract bank applications and services from the powerful storage and compute that underpins them, and manage the provisioning process very easily.

“Windows Server with Hyper-V and System Center helped us transform our data centre environment into a highly automated and self-service private cloud,” says Issa. “Instead of building physical servers over and over again to be tested, our team can just provision straight to the cloud using Microsoft tools. It’s very fast, and because the Microsoft technologies are all integrated into our private cloud it’s very efficient for our developers. This means a huge boost to our productivity.”

Having identified the Bank in a Box components, ING DIRECT needed to be sure the idea would work. The team engaged Dimension Data to build a pilot, with the vendors providing extensive hardware, software and technical expertise. “The way Microsoft and the other vendors collaborated to deliver a workable solution was very impressive,” says Henderson.

“We couldn’t find any reference or case studies to support where we wanted to go – it hadn’t been done before,” Issa says. “But the vendors gave us confidence. Each brought their passion and ideas. The solution was a combination of all those ideas.”

With the pilot successful, ING DIRECT commissioned Dimension Data to deliver the solution.

“When we showcased it to our executive team they were amazed to see how this technology came together to reduce a process that used to take months down to minutes,” enthuses Henderson. “They saw straight away that it would dramatically reduce development times so we can get

new products and services to market faster.”

“The magic ingredient in realising the Bank in a Box vision was the close integration and collaborative relationship between Microsoft, Cisco, NetApp and Dimension Data. We brought together the expertise and technology to solve a very complex customer challenge and deliver a very forward-thinking private cloud solution that puts the bank on the front foot strategically,” says Phil Goldie, Director, Server, Tools and Platform Strategy, Microsoft Australia.

Benefits

The solution helped enable ING DIRECT to transition to a private cloud infrastructure that’s aligned with the bank’s strategic priorities, reducing the time associated with environment provisioning from three months to ten minutes. This means that the bank can get new products to market in a fraction of the time it used to take, securing a significant advantage over competitors.

Established a cloud-enabled operating model

ING DIRECT laid the foundation for the bank’s continued IT transformation by establishing a private cloud infrastructure that paves the way for more efficient cloud-based business processes in future.

“A huge benefit is that we’ve cloud enabled ourselves in terms of our operating model and our IT strategy,” says Henderson. “It’s not just technology – wrapped around the solution is a whole set of new, more efficient work processes.”

“We’ve delivered a platform that will let us be very quickly cloud-ready. It’s virtualised, and agility is built into the DNA of the architecture,” says Issa. “With more agile customer-facing systems we can direct funds to differentiating

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Ben Issa, Head of IT Strategy, ING DIRECT Australia

our services and innovating, rather than operations. So we can improve the customer experience – and focus on where we want to take our business next."

Reduced time and cost of environment provisioning

"The solution enables us to streamline processes that previously took eight people three months with a very simple self-service model," says Henderson. "Our staff can now provision copies of the bank in minutes, not weeks, so we can test new ideas very rapidly. It's given us a competitive edge."

By leveraging existing Microsoft investments, the solution helped reduce the cost of provisioning significantly compared to the previous model, and required little training since developers can interact with it using the Microsoft products they already use.

"Because we could simply extend our existing Microsoft products to gain new capabilities, such as Windows Server Hyper-V virtualisation technology and System Center for management and automation, it was very cost-effective," says Issa.

Enabled faster delivery of new projects

"We're using this solution in so many scenarios and we're seeing new use cases all the time," adds Issa. "For example, we can give a customer service representative access to all our customer-facing applications for training purposes. Or give a developer a full version of the bank at induction. And when we have customer or operational issues, it's much easier to study and solve them. In fact, everything we do is faster – our capability now supports our appetite for transformation and delivering faster for our customers."

With an efficient and accessible platform for testing new ideas, the IT team can focus more on differentiating the bank. "We can now redirect our skilled people and our cost base toward innovation," states Henderson. "We've said to our people: if you've got a good idea, go for your life – test it. Now the only thing holding us back is how fast we can come up with the ideas."

Improved IT efficiency

Now that the solution is operating in Australia, ING DIRECT is preparing to deploy it globally. "In 2012 at least three of our global entities will look at rolling it out – it's great kudos for the team, spearheading innovation across the group," says Henderson.

In Australia, the solution has been so successful that the team has decided to move it into production, expanding the highly scalable platform to provide more compute power and greater throughput so it can form the foundation for more customer-facing applications and services.

"We're looking to migrate other applications and services to this new platform, eliminating the disparate infrastructures they have been running on," says Henderson. "We're talking to Microsoft about how we can automate and virtualise these services as much as possible across our business to reduce cost and improve agility. We expect to reap an even greater return on our investment as we move into the next phase."

Technical Information

Software and Services

Windows Server 2008 R2 Hyper-V
Microsoft System Center
Microsoft Visual Studio
Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server
Microsoft Visual Studio Virtual Lab Management

Hardware

Cisco Nexus 5000 Series switches
Cisco Unified Computing System B200 M2 Blade Server
Cisco Unified Computing System Manager 1.4(1j)
NetApp FAS3270 Storage System

IT Issues

Establish a private cloud infrastructure for faster development and testing

Microsoft Product that was featured

Windows Server Hyper-V provides a foundational virtualisation platform that enables you to transition to the cloud. With Windows Server 2008 R2 you get a compelling solution for core virtualisation scenarios –

production server consolidation, dynamic data centre, business continuity, VDI and test and development.

Microsoft System Center 2012 helps you manage your IT environments across traditional data centres, private and public clouds, client computers and devices.



Partner Information

Dimension Data Australia Pty. Ltd.

www.dimensiondata.com/au

Cisco Systems Australia Pty. Ltd.

www.cisco.com

NetApp Australia Pty. Ltd.

www.netapp.com/au

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services call the sales and information line on 13 20 58 Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm AEST. To find a partner or solution, visit www.microsoft.com/australia/findapartner/

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