



The Home Depot Partners with Nutanix to Drive IT Innovation

World's Largest Home Improvement Retailer Standardizes on Nutanix to Accelerate Software Development and Reduce TCO to create a Better Customer Experience

BUSINESS BENEFITS

By moving to Nutanix, The Home Depot has been able to consolidate its technology infrastructure and merge its server, storage, and virtualization teams. The new unified operations group can now optimize and manage the entire infrastructure stack from a single console, driving IT innovation across the company. The Home Depot has also reduced TCO with this platform by double digits and shortened the time to provision new capacity from three weeks to one hour, reducing infrastructure costs and enabling developers to more quickly deploy new applications to internal users and customers.

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- Kevin Priest, Senior Director, The Home Depot

THE HOME DEPOT DIFFERENCE

The Home Depot lives by a simple premise: Put customers and associates first, and the rest will take care of itself. By holding true to its values and corporate vision, The Home Depot has grown exponentially from just two stores in Atlanta, Georgia in 1979, to become the world's largest home improvement retailer today.

INDUSTRY

Retail

CHALLENGES

The Home Depot's legacy IT infrastructure was slow, difficult to manage, and expensive to procure and maintain. The Home Depot's IT team started the search for a more cost-effective IT solution that would provide better performance, enable rapid scalability, and simplify delivery of all enterprise workloads.

SOLUTION

Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform

- Acropolis (AOS) Software
- Prism Pro IT Operations

Applications

- Oracle databases
- Microsoft SQL Server
- Cloud Foundry
- VDI
- General purpose workloads
- In-house developed applications

The company currently employs nearly 400,000 associates and operates more than 2,200 stores in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. It also has a very successful e-commerce business that offers more than one million products to its do-it-yourself customers and professional contractors throughout North America.

The Home Depot has obtained its great success through decades of hard work, with a strong and unwavering commitment to providing the industry's best products and exemplary customer service. In order to achieve these goals and continue to grow, IT innovation is more important than ever for The Home Depot. From inventory tracking, to online ordering, to supply chain management - The Home Depot is always looking for new ways to improve productivity and operational efficiency for its vast retail store and e-commerce business.

The Home Depot also believes in cultivating strong relationships with all of its vendors, built on a solid platform of trust, honesty, and integrity. The vendors chosen by The Home Depot are those that offer the best solutions and services the industry has to offer, coupled with the desire and willingness to work as true business and technology partners. In part, that's why The Home Depot chose to partner with Nutanix, and Nutanix Enterprise Cloud as the platform to migrate its legacy applications and workloads.

IT CHALLENGES

The Home Depot has a long and well-earned reputation as a technology leader. In 2015, the company decided to revolutionize its entire IT environment to enhance the performance and scalability of its infrastructure and reduce the total cost of ownership (TCO). "We used to try to cut costs by just upgrading to faster servers and more efficient storage," noted Kevin Priest, Senior Director at The Home Depot. "We needed to find a better way to reduce TCO."

THE NUTANIX SOLUTION

The Home Depot evaluated multiple hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) vendors and storage virtualization solutions for their next-generation architecture. "We looked for vendors that shared our vision of moving to a software-driven world," noted Priest.

The Home Depot started by moving its non-production applications over to Nutanix, followed by the company's production workloads, including those on Cloud Foundry. The Home Depot also virtualized its Apache Tomcat grid implementation and deployed a VDI environment using Nutanix as the underlying infrastructure platform. More than 98% of The Home Depot's datacenter virtual workloads - including those supporting its retail operations, decision analytics, and supply chain - are now delivered by Nutanix. "Our decision was reinforced by the ability to run Nutanix on whatever hardware platforms we chose."

BENEFITS

Significant TCO Reduction

According to Priest, one of the biggest benefits of partnering with Nutanix has been the reduction in TCO. "When an application team comes to our group and says they need CPUs, memory, and storage, I give them a price for the project," explained Priest. "Since the introduction of Nutanix, I have been able to lower the internal chargeback costs to my customers by almost half."

Because of the lower TCO, The Home Depot's development teams have been able to reallocate their budgets to launch additional development projects and add more virtual machines to increase the performance of existing applications and services. "Nutanix software is making such a positive difference in the supportability and performance of our entire environment that we direct all new workloads to Nutanix," noted Priest.

Provisioning Time Reduced from 3 Weeks to 1 Hour

Another benefit of moving to Nutanix was the increased speed of deploying new capacity. “Nutanix is a unified, hyperconverged platform that allows us to build, expand, and tear down VMs much faster than before,” reported Priest. “Our developers used to have to wait three weeks for us to provision technology resources to them. With Nutanix, it’s done in less than an hour.” With the faster provisioning, The Home Depot’s developers have been able to dramatically accelerate delivery of their software development projects, resulting in a faster launch of new services and applications to internal end users and customers.

Enabling Capacity Management

There wasn’t an easy way to perform capacity management on the legacy architecture. As a result, The Home Depot’s IT team would deploy new server pods, and then keep adding workloads until they ran out of resources. Application performance would inevitably degrade over time, and the operations team would have to go in and manually tweak the system in different ways, but only after the performance issues had already occurred. Examples included increasing the number of CPU cores or adding additional storage.

The Home Depot is now using Nutanix Prism Pro to obtain comprehensive visibility and control over the entire environment. “Prism Pro makes it extremely easy to watch all of the clusters in our environment and quickly reconfigure things as needed,” said Priest. “It provides very clear metrics on oversubscription and utilization, giving us a powerful, proactive capacity management function that we never had before.” After identifying any issues, The Home Depot can now shift capacity from one cluster to another to provide an “infrastructure-as-code” management experience.

Consolidating Teams

By moving to Nutanix, The Home Depot was able to consolidate its server, storage, and virtualization teams into a single, operations group. Prism Pro provides the combined team with full visibility into the entire environment, rather than aggregating information from separately managed infrastructure silos. “The ‘people benefits’ with Nutanix are just as impressive as the reduction in TCO,” explained Priest. “By consolidating teams, our admins are finally able to see the bigger picture. Server specialists can now make suggestions about our virtual infrastructure, and storage experts offering feedback on our servers. The consolidated team has unleashed a wave of innovation across the organization.”

Empowering Application Developers

The Home Depot recently deployed a dedicated Nutanix environment for its database teams, and is encouraging the teams to participate in the management of the infrastructure. “Since Prism Pro is so easy to use, we told the database engineers they could quickly learn to manage their own environments and monitor capacity utilization,” said Priest. “They really like the ability to see their VMs, servers, and storage, with detailed forecasting that shows when they’re likely to run out of resources. It enables them to proactively ensure application performance and formulate more accurate budgets for their projects.”

Enabling the Admins

The Home Depot is now able to train its combined operations team members on one, standardized hyperconverged platform. “The Nutanix training team has been a great help in adopting the new technology. Education helps overcome any fears of adopting a new platform and ensures that we are using best practices,” acknowledged Priest.

A “Justifiably Famous” Support Experience

“The Nutanix Support team has been impressive,” Priest stated. “When you call in with an issue, you’re immediately connected to someone who actually understands your problem. With many IT vendors, you progress from someone who is only there to route your call, to a second person who can take notes on your case, and then hopefully to another person who’s able to solve your problems. Nutanix has set the standard of what customer-centric technology support should look like.”

Applications On-Prem or the Cloud

The Home Depot is currently running a mix of workloads on-prem and in the cloud. “We do know that it’s easier to do infrastructure in the external cloud, but cloud costs are variable and must be managed differently,” said Priest. “Nutanix has equipped us to enhance our decision on when to run something externally or on internal servers and that has made a fundamental difference for us.”

A True Partnership for Innovation

“Nutanix not only converges technologies; their software has enabled us to converge infrastructure, teams, and opportunities,” concluded Priest. “By combining IT specialists into a single operations group, we can now see our end-to-end IT environment, work collaboratively, and make better decisions for the business. Our partnership with Nutanix makes IT visibility, efficiency, and innovation possible.”



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