

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

PGi halves the time-to-market for new products with cloud infrastructure solutions from CA Technologies



CUSTOMER PROFILE

Industry: Communication services

Organisation: PGi

Employees: More than 2,300

Revenue: \$601.5 million

BUSINESS

Premier Global Services, Inc. (PGi) is a software and services company delivering real-time virtual meetings, conferencing and collaboration solutions. PGi's solutions support over four million meetings every day.

CHALLENGE

To maintain its competitive advantage, PGi needs to continuously reinvent its solutions. However, lengthy IT provisioning processes were impacting the time-to-market for new customer offerings.

SOLUTION

Using CA® 3Tera®AppLogic® software, PGi has created agile cloud-based infrastructure solutions (grids) to develop and support customer services. PGi now operates over 25 services and applications through the cloud.

BENEFIT

PGi halved the time-to-market for delivering a new product, which it expects to safeguard competitive advantage and facilitate growth. A cloud-based approach has also decreased costs and increased service quality.

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Business

Connecting people across the globe

Every day Premier Global Services, Inc. (PGi) enables 15 million people to attend four million virtual meetings in real-time. From web, audio and video conferencing solutions to document delivery, PGi helps companies and their people collaborate quickly and intuitively.

Founded in 1991, PGi has operations in 24 countries including the UK, US, Australia and France. The company's services are used by 80% of the Fortune 100 and are available on-demand 24/7.

As well as revolutionizing the way people interact, PGi's solutions help businesses reduce and eliminate costs and automate communication with customers and employees.

The company has a track record in innovation, and has received accolades from Forbes Magazine, eWeek, Information Week and the Product Development and Management Association.

Challenge

Speeding up the launch of new customer offerings

To meet customer demand, PGi needs to continually evolve its services and products. As David Guthrie, Chief Technology Officer at PGi, responsible for operations, product management and development, explains, "Innovation is key to growing our business and maintaining our differentiation. We need to provide new solutions to our customers very quickly and to be on the cutting-edge of our industry."

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“We needed to move through the innovation cycle more quickly and consistently.”

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David Guthrie

Chief Technology Officer, PGi

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The time-to-market for new products, however, is dependent on the provisioning of IT systems to support PGi's application delivery at all stages - from development and testing to quality assurance and production.

“The cycle was simply too long,” comments Guthrie. “It could take up to 90 days to procure the IT infrastructure equipment, find a hosting location and then implement the application – and this was

just for the product development phase. We would then have to go through the same process to provision the IT infrastructure needed for quality assurance and again for production.”

In addition to the time constraints, the IT environments used at the different stages were not exact replicas, which caused problems when PGI moved a new product from development to production. “We needed to find a way to move through the innovation cycle more quickly and consistently,” comments Guthrie. “We also needed to be able to meet customer demand for high availability and scalability for real-time services.”

Solution

Increasing IT agility and scalability with cloud computing

When PGI embarked on developing a new product that would shift the company from its web/audio conferencing roots into a provider of virtual real-time meetings, it decided to look for new ways to revolutionize its approach to provisioning IT.

“The market forces were driving us towards cloud computing – we have to innovate faster and be more competitive, and that requires greater IT agility,” comments Guthrie. “Although we initially only used a cloud-based infrastructure for application development, we soon broadened the scope to include testing and production.”

PGi’s cloud computing strategy is underpinned by CA 3TeraAppLogic cloud computing platform. The solution wraps an application and its supporting infrastructure to create a business service. CA 3Tera AppLogic software combines the cloud fabric, IP SAN, application stacks and infrastructure components, which can all be provisioned and de-provisioned via the product’s intuitive user interface.



25

business applications leveraging
cloud-based infrastructure
running on CA 3Tera AppLogic

Using the CA 3Tera AppLogic 'self-service' infrastructure editor, PGI can make rapid changes to its application architecture, add and return resources to a central computing pool with minimal effort and zero downtime. "We can deploy new computing grids and applications without having to buy or install new hardware – we just draw the new application and quickly deploy on the existing cloud infrastructure," adds Guthrie.

Cloud-based services with greater resilience and availability

Using CA 3Tera AppLogic software, PGI has created three cloud computing grids to support its new product, iMeet®, which provides users with a personal online meeting room to schedule virtual sessions with colleagues.

“We are now deploying more applications in the cloud than on a traditional infrastructure.”

David Guthrie

Chief Technology Officer, PGI

“Having multiple cloud locations and multiple grids assures we can provide resilient service to our customers, having very little or no downtime when upgrading for new features or changing the application. That makes the service much more reliable and our IT teams much more flexible”, adds Guthrie.

Since its initial deployment of CA 3Tera AppLogic software in November 2008 PGI’s use of the solution has continuously expanded. As Guthrie explains, “I’ve challenged my team to think about how we deploy business services in the future. Rather than justify why we should use the cloud, we need to consider if there are any barriers why we can’t take this approach.

“We are now deploying more applications in the cloud than on a traditional infrastructure,” continues Guthrie. “Selecting the right workloads is important; organizations must consider the security and compliance ramifications of a cloud-based approach. Web-based applications and business services that require high levels of availability and/or scalability are particularly well-suited to a cloud environment.”

Currently, PGI has over 25 business applications leveraging cloud-based infrastructure that are running on CA 3Tera AppLogic software. These include production applications, including another new product called GlobalMeet®, various PGI websites, gateways, transactional portals, partner and customer portals.

“PGI is definitely a cloud company – all of our services are accessible through the cloud. From a Web deployment perspective all our Web applications are leveraging cloud, we are definitely moving toward exclusively running on cloud-based infrastructure,” comments Guthrie.

Benefit

Faster and more cost-effective product development

Cloud computing has revolutionized how PGI provisions IT resources to meet its business needs and launch new services. “We need to be able to quickly deploy consistent IT resources around the globe to support our development, quality assurance and production activities – and to achieve this at a low cost. CA 3Tera AppLogic software has helped us meet this goal,” comments Guthrie.

For example, by taking a cloud-based approach for its product iMeet, PGI was able to halve the normal time-to-market for a new customer offering. As Guthrie confirms, “We went from development to a beta product in nine months – previously it would have taken us 18 months.”

Also, using CA 3Tera AppLogic software, PGI shortened the product-deployment cycle from seven months to between two and five days by reducing the time to procure and install infrastructure, when testing and deploying new instances of their applications.

Greater application quality

Moreover, the quality of the applications has been greatly improved because PGI has been able to scale up its infrastructure to undertake more intensive testing that would not have been possible without the flexibility of the 3Tera AppLogic cloud infrastructure provisioning.

A cloud-based approach has increased the availability of the service PGI’s provides to customers. In fact, PGI has been able to deliver 99.999 per cent availability by load balancing across several grids.

“One of the unexpected benefits of going with cloud-based infrastructure was the amount of uptime that we can have with some of these services,” says Guthrie. “When you have multiple grids per application, you gain the ability to do failover and load balancing in real time. Upgrading grids and moving services between grids becomes really easy and effective.”

More time for strategic activities

With the ease of use comes the benefit of moving the focus of the IT teams to more strategic tasks. As Guthrie explains, “We have been able to free up our operations team from day-to-day infrastructure management, enabling them to engage with strategic activities and come up with new models to maximize uptime for our customers.”

By improving the quality and time-to-market of its solutions, PGi has been able to:

- Retain competitive advantage
- Facilitate business growth
- Realize financial savings

“With CA 3Tera AppLogic software, we can continue to provide our customers with innovative solutions that meet their needs and revolutionize how people interact,” comments Guthrie. “Cloud computing has opened up a whole new world where we can quickly and cost-effectively deploy applications. Our customers don’t need to know we are leveraging the cloud; the experience is exactly the same except that we can get new products to them in a shorter timeframe.”



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