

YO! Sushi migrates entire infrastructure to the cloud

About YO! Sushi

Founded in 1997, YO! Sushi has grown from a London-only sushi brand to an international iconic success, with over 60 restaurants worldwide. YO! Sushi, recently named the UK's best value high street restaurant by influential food magazine Olive, serves over 3.5 million customers a year throughout the UK and across the globe in Dublin, Sintra, Dubai, and Bahrain.

Never buy a server again!

YO! Sushi hopes never to buy a server again, according to IT Manager Billy Waters, and is placing its bets on cloud computing and taking advantage of the IT consumerisation trend to improve productivity and flexibility.

Although expanding at a rate of ten stores per year, YO! Sushi maintains, in the words of Waters, a very lean IT department. "Our policy is to outsource to the experts wherever possible, and, with only one in-house IT professional, getting the most out of IT suppliers is crucial," he explained. "We need connectivity and everything to be always on, all the time. Supporting all of that internally would be very difficult."

Running Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft Office and a number of other applications on seven-year-old servers was a cause of concern to YO! Sushi. "The servers were reaching the end of their useful lives, and replacing them and upgrading our core office software would require substantial investment," added Waters. "We were convinced that there was a more elegant, cost-effective and efficient alternative, and we didn't really want to end up with a room full of servers."

A further issue was that of disaster recovery and business continuity. "This is obviously a 'must have' for all organisations but we were concerned that our existing solutions were not as effective as they could be," continued Waters. "Again, with just one internal IT specialist, the back-up procedures were time consuming, and upgrading to a new, automated solution would be expensive and require additional investments in hardware."

Evaluating the options

Determined to identify a flexible alternative that delivered the capabilities that YO! Sushi required – both today and for the future – and which delivered real value for money, Waters evaluated the options. "Broadly speaking, there were three options: Replace and upgrade our on-premises infrastructure, partner with an organisation that provided hosted data centre services, or the cloud," said Waters.

It was during the search for a future-proof alternative to the traditional infrastructure solutions that Waters encountered Hitachi Consulting (formally Information Management Group Ltd.) Hitachi has a proven track record of delivering strategies and services for information management that help organisations achieve operational efficiency, agility and competitive differentiation through a combination of an innovative use of technology and extensive business experience.

Having reviewed YO! Sushi's objectives and analysed the company's existing processes and procedures, Hitachi proposed that the business migrate its entire infrastructure to Microsoft

Office 365. Office 365 is the familiar Microsoft Office collaboration and productivity tools delivered through the cloud. "Office 365 takes the industry's most recognised set of productivity and collaboration tools and delivers them as a subscription service," explained Hitachi's Head of Online Services.

A "no-brainer"

"Hitachi's proposal had a number of immediate attractions, even if it meant that YO! Sushi would be an early adopter of this innovative technology," continued Waters. "The more we looked into the benefits of Microsoft Office 365, the more we realised that it could have been tailor-made for us – it was considerably cheaper than the other alternatives, far easier to manage and removed, at a stroke, all of our business continuity and disaster recovery concerns. It was, basically, a no-brainer."

Working in partnership with Waters and YO! Sushi stakeholders, Hitachi began the process of migrating YO! Sushi's 120 users to Microsoft Office 365, sourcing the subscriptions, testing the environment, undertaking development and providing training, knowledge sharing and familiarisation sessions to ensure that the transition would be as smooth as possible.

40% cost savings

According to Waters, the cloud set-up will save YO! Sushi about 40% over a five-year period compared to an on-premises exchange server. "In addition to the up-front and long-term savings, we get the benefit of having tools such as Microsoft SharePoint Online, as well as not being in the position of replacing an Exchange server again in five years," he explained.

"And the solution is future-proof. If we went the traditional route, we would have to do the same thing again in five years' time. This way, we never have to buy a server again!"

Committed to the cloud

The restaurant chain is also implementing a cloud-based stock management system, as well as its payroll system.

"Every time we have something expiring and we need an update, we look for the cloud version rather than on-site," added Waters. "YO! Sushi wanted to roll-out a new intranet and consistent communication services to all employees, including restaurant staff. cloud computing seemed an ideal way to do this at low cost and with minimal impact to the business. As an early adopter of Microsoft Office 365, YO! Sushi needed an implementation partner with the right skills and experience to help achieve this goal. Hitachi gave us that option, with a first rate team and customer service to make our move to the cloud a success."

Benefits

- Elimination of high cost replacement/upgrade of server farm
- Microsoft Office collaboration and productivity tools delivered through the cloud

- Subscription service enabling accurate budgeting
- Automatic availability of updates and enhancements
- Simplified management
- 40% cost savings over a five-year period
- Improved collaboration and information sharing
- Future-proof solution

About Hitachi Consulting

Hitachi Consulting is the global solutions and professional services organization within Hitachi Ltd., a global innovation leader in industrial and information technology solutions and an early pioneer of the Internet of Things. Hitachi Consulting is a business integrator for the IoT era and a catalyst for digital transformation. Using our deep domain knowledge, we collaborate with clients to help them innovate faster, maximize operational efficiency and realize measurable, sustainable business and societal value. As a consulting-led solutions company, we can help you leverage data as a strategic asset to drive competitive differentiation, customer loyalty and growth. To learn more, visit www.hitachiconsulting.com.

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IT Manager
Yo! Sushi

