

Transform the datacenter

Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Abdul Latif Jameel United Finance Co.

Website: www.aljfinance.com

Customer Size: 3,153 employees

Country or Region: Saudi Arabia

Industry: Financial Services

Customer Profile

Within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Abdul Latif Jameel United Finance Company is the market leading company in vehicles leasing. Also, the company offers a wide range of financing services.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Windows Server 2012 Datacenter
- Microsoft Windows Server 2012 R2
- Microsoft System Center Suite 2012
- Microsoft Hyper-V

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Automated datacenter underpins business flexibility and platform for enhanced growth

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Ahmed N. T. Delos Santos, IT Infrastructure General Manager, Abdul Latif Jameel United Finance Company

Abdul Latif Jameel United Finance Co. (ALJUF), a leading finance company in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia turns to a raft of Microsoft technologies to develop automated datacenter operations to increase IT agility to support dramatic business growth for its branch networks.

Business Needs

Abdul Latif Jameel United Finance Co. is the market leading company in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for leasing new vehicles. ALJUF initially provided finance and leasing services for ALJ's automotive business. However as both ALJ grew so did ALJUF and as leasing have become the normal trend for making purchase, this growth has been even further accelerated with the leasing company also expanding into other areas of commerce beyond automotive. Today, it has about 280 branches, and almost 3,153 associates.

The core application for ALJUF is in-house bespoke app known as 'FS' (financial services). However, as the company has grown and expanded, enhancements to this app were made using .NET and Microsoft SQL database running on Windows servers. The company is also using Temenos T24 features as a financial application.

With surging business growth ALJUF's IT division was facing challenges in providing high availability and business continuity for its core applications along with a raft of other applications and services it provided

for its branch networks. Ahmed N. T. Delos Santos, IT Infrastructure General Manager, ALJUF, said: "We needed a new approach to our IT infrastructure, one that would provide us with increased capacity and scalability along with centralized management to ensure that we could ease the burden of daily operations while ensuring we could support the business through what is a dramatic growth phase." Aside from the business needs, Mr. Khaled Al Gakhlab, IT Director, was looking for a dynamic and scalable solution that would underpin business growth and agility, especially for other platforms other than Microsoft.

Solution

Delos Santos knew what he needed to achieve and how it would be mapped out. He said: "We wanted to develop a private cloud and move from physical servers to virtualized servers. This would make infrastructure management so much easier enabling straightforward server provisioning, robust support, flexibility and the capacity to expand in line with business needs. It would also ensure we could meet out overarching objectives of ensuring high availability and business continuity, as well as benefiting from lower costs and reduced needs for space in the data center."

The company has an Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft and after considering

alternative technology it chose a raft of Microsoft technologies including the datacenter edition of Windows Server 2012 for its host servers, Hyper-V for virtualization, Windows Server 2012 for virtual servers and System Center Suite 2012 for cloud and server management. Delos Santos added: "Thanks to the Enterprise Agreement we make cost savings but there were other reasons too, such as technology updates, product development, ease of management and skills upgrades, to make our infrastructure competitive."

Further important reasons that informed the choice included the familiarity and ease of use of Microsoft interfaces, compatibility, features, and the integration of virtualization technologies with ALJUF's operating systems, databases, and hardware resources. By using Windows Server 2102 the company is also positioning itself for the future roll out of a virtual desktop infrastructure. Delos Santos said: "VDI has a lot of benefits when it comes to cost-saving on a long-term solution, as well as ease of management for end-user PC's. We are planning to roll out the VDI solution on a group or enterprise level but this is something for the future."

Benefits

In short, with the use of Microsoft technologies, ALJUF has developed an easy to manage automated data center infrastructure that is easy to manage and inherently capable of delivering increased capacity as, and when it is required.

"Compared to our previous data center operations we are now more confident and can manage our resources much easier. In addition, this has enhanced our skills so we are more competitive and confident in the IT field and on the global market," said Delos Santos.

- Private cloud data center that to a large degree is almost fully automated
- Infrastructure that is characterized by flexibility and expandability
- Easy centralized management of all resources via console that provides both graphical and visual status reports across the IT infrastructure
- Up-to-date IT resources and services for the business and the ability to easily cater for any requirement for resource provisioning and application hosting
- Guaranteed high availability and business continuity whatever the demands of the business
- Foundation for potential virtual desktop infrastructure roll-out for up to 1,000 end users