

HYBRID CLOUD SOLUTION FUELS EXPANSION OF ONLINE CAR PARTS SUPPLIER



Successful Irish e-commerce company MicksGarage.com needed a cloud partner it could depend on to support its ambitious plans for expansion across Europe.

With more than 6.5 million product listings on offer and customers needing their spare parts urgently, MicksGarage.com is heavily dependent on its IT infrastructure to manage the complex logistics operation. Working with Sungard Availability Services, it pursued a resilient, multi-tenant cloud solution that would give it the high availability and scalability the company needs.

RESULTS

- Scalable production environment to support European growth plans
- Flexible capacity to cope with spikes in demand
- Ability to access company systems and data remotely from anywhere in the world
- Personalised support makes service hassle-free
- Impressive SLA-backed uptime target prevents missed sales, lost customers and reputational damage
- Improved ability to attract and retain skilled IT staff.

SERVICES

- **Hybrid Cloud** – highly available multi-tenanted cloud solution on dual cloud servers with load balancer and redundant dedicated physical server for maximum uptime
- **Managed Services** – 24-hour proactive monitoring of infrastructure platform and OS patch management and security
- **System protection and failover** – that ensures 2 x resilience over all workloads and infrastructure.



About MicksGarage.com

Award-winning online car parts supplier MicksGarage.com is as much about technology as the spare parts it sells, its success hinging on the speed and reliability of its IT infrastructure and streamlined business processes. Operating in a fiercely competitive market, the Dublin-based firm has grown over the past decade to become an €11 million turnover company employing 48 people at its 40,000 sq ft premises.

“Availability is absolutely critical to us. If a customer finds the website down they may never come back, being down for even a minute would cost us hundreds of euros – an hour would run to thousands – and that’s without the knock to our reputation. We needed a partner who absolutely guarantees us uptime and the level of availability we enjoy is outstanding.”

Michael Crean, Operations Director,
micksgarage.com





THE CHALLENGE



SCALING INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET RAPID GROWTH IN A COST-EFFECTIVE WAY

The company has recently opened a distribution centre in Krakow, Poland to service the flourishing Eastern European market, and a Liverpool site is scheduled to open in 2016 to support next day deliveries to the UK. As a business that ships over 18,000 car parts and accessories to more than 100 countries every month, it is no exaggeration when co-founder and Operations Director Michael Crean states, **“Downtime would simply be disastrous - we would lose customers, revenue and future business.”**

The multiple award-winning e-commerce business has worked with Sungard Availability Services from its beginnings in 2003. When it started out the business relied heavily on physical hardware but its ambitious

growth plans meant this would require huge capital investment, slow the business down and would soon become unsustainable.

Furthermore, with the company's expansion plans resulting in frequent travel, the need to access systems remotely from anywhere in the world was vital so, in 2013, MicksGarage.com took the decision to move to a virtual environment, retaining just one physical server hosted by Sungard Availability Services in Dublin.

THE SOLUTION



HYBRID CLOUD WITH MANAGED SERVICES

With the need to ensure high levels of operational uptime throughout paramount, MicksGarage.com worked in close partnership with Sungard Availability Services to plan the migration in minute detail. Having, as a start-up, initially selected its provider solely on the basis of cost, MicksGarage.com quickly recognised the value of having an experienced partner it could rely on as it took such an important step in the company's development.

Other prospective providers were fazed by the difficulty posed by managing (and recovering if necessary) a hybrid environment consisting of both physical and virtual servers. Not so Sungard Availability Services, which today manages a highly available multi-tenant cloud solution on two enterprise cloud servers with load balancing, as well as managing a redundant physical server to ensure there is no single point of failure. This gives MicksGarage.com the capability to handle sudden spikes in demand, which with its first TV advertising campaign imminent, Michael Crean finds hugely reassuring.

“Availability is absolutely critical to us. If a customer finds the website down they may never come back,” he explains. **“Being down for even a minute would cost us hundreds of euros – an hour would run to thousands – and that’s without the knock to our reputation. We needed a partner who absolutely guarantees us uptime and the level of availability we enjoy is outstanding.”**

The set-up is supported by 24-hour proactive availability monitoring of the infrastructure platform with client-defined thresholds and Managed Operating System Patch Management.

THE BENEFITS



SOLID FOUNDATIONS WITH THE AGILITY TO SEIZE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Moving to a cloud-based infrastructure has given MicksGarage.com the scalability and flexibility it needs for future growth. The firm has now opened a fully functioning second office in County Mayo, which helps it overcome the problem of competing with big city firms to attract and retain skilled IT professionals.

Irish entrepreneurs Michael and Ciaran Crean have been liberated to focus on their company's expansion plans, secure in the knowledge that its day-to-day operations are in safe hands. Describing the close relationship between the two companies Michael Crean adds, **“I definitely view Sungard Availability Services as a key partner. They’re absolutely critical to our business. If they have a problem one morning we don’t work.”**

He finds the support provided invaluable.

“The dedicated phone number we have as customers works very well – you always end up talking to someone who is extremely knowledgeable. We rely on that expertise. I like the fact we get personal service from a local team who I feel have a personal interest in seeing us do well. But at the same time we have the backing of a global company that is big enough to handle our growth.”

Today, as Michael Crean brings plans for a physical presence in each European country within five years to fruition, he knows his IT infrastructure will not place a limit on his company's ambitions.

With backing from venture capitalists, MicksGarage.com is eyeing a target of €100m turnover by 2020 and, says Michael, **“I believe that is fully achievable. We have a great platform and infrastructure in place so now it’s all about the sales.”**

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