rackspace

Helping Apsis drive smarter marketing for customers

Apsis needs a scalable, reliable and secure private cloud environment for its email marketing platform Apsis Pro, so the company chose Rackspace's world-class hosting and support.

Our customer

Apsis delivers data-driven solutions for marketing automation, e-commerce, lead generation, segmentation and email marketing. The Apsis Pro platform is its most popular, and enables them to send marketing emails directly to their subscribers.

The obstacles they faced

Apsis needed a reliable and secure dedicated private cloud environment for the Apsis Pro platform. On-premise hosting couldn't match the pace of the company's growth. It also tied the R&D team up in maintenance and management activities, stealing them away from developing innovative services that would help to grow the business.

How we helped

Apsis Pro now runs in a dedicated and secure private cloud environment, provided by Rackspace and supported by Fanatical Experience™. A lead engineer continually optimises the platform for peak performance and proactive infrastructure management means potential failures are identified before they happen.

What we achieved together

Apsis now has a reliable and scalable platform that satisfies its customers' stringent security requirements, backed with Rackspace's expertise. The Apsis R&D team has been freed up to focus on more value-added activities, such as creating new application features.

APSIS

Scaling for rapid data growth

For many companies, email is an essential part of the marketing mix. Apsis provides data-driven marketing solutions, including Apsis Pro, which enables companies to send eDM (electronic direct mail), carry out split tests to see which subject lines and content combinations generate the best response, and personalise emails based on the customer's behaviour. It also offers features to simplify the administration of events, carry out surveys, and send personalised text messages.

The IT architecture needs to be able to handle sizeable customer databases, reliably send emails, and keep the data secure. "We used to rent space in a small data centre, but our R&D team was responsible for all the servers and hardware," says Robert Hong, cloud architect, Apsis International. "That simply wasn't sustainable. We are growing fast, which means we need something more scalable. But more importantly, we don't want to be an IT company, maintaining equipment. We want to be developing new solutions for customers and helping them with their email marketing."

Moving to the cloud

Apsis now uses Rackspace's private cloud managed services for its core Apsis Pro platform, backed by Fanatical Experience from Rackspace's experts who provide an Intensive service level.

"We have looked previously at moving Apsis Pro to a public cloud environment but it hasn't worked," says Hong. "We have a huge and complex database hosted at Rackspace, for the whole backend of Apsis Pro, and we couldn't get the same balance between price and performance with public cloud. Instead,

we've received great support and guidance in configuring and setting up secure and stable communication between our different hosting providers. The expertise and flexibility from the Rackspace network team has been of great help."

Their Rackspace environment is based in world-class data centres with redundant power, HVAC and cooling systems for maximum uptime. The Intensive service level offers a 100% network uptime guarantee, one-hour hardware replacement guarantee, and storage device access guarantee. The enterprise lead engineer at Rackspace continually optimises the environment to meet Apsis's needs. Should an issue or query arise, Apsis has unlimited access to live support, every day, at any hour.

"The Apsis Pro platform that runs in Rackspace's data centre is our company's engine," says Hong. "The product on it and the mail servers within it are the heart of the company and send out millions of emails every day."

"A key performance factor is email deliverability," adds Hong. "When we send emails our IP addresses build up, over a long time, a trusted reputation with ISP spam filters. So it's essential that we maintain continuity of these addresses wherever our servers are hosted. Here we found Rackspace to be more helpful than other companies we have worked with. They were very willing to learn the nature of our business so they could support us better."

The platform reliability is critical. "We've had virtually no downtime on our platform since moving to Rackspace," says Hong. "The high availability and low downtime ensure that our customers are happy with the performance of the core Apsis Pro platform."

"With the peace of mind of a stable private cloud environment provided by Rackspace, we can focus on creating new applications instead of worrying about uptime and whether we have sufficient back-ups in place."

Robert Hong, Cloud Architect, Apsis International

Providing proactive support

"We have been an extremely fast-growing company, and we know we can rely on Rackspace to provide the support needed for our speed of change," says Hong. "The more changes we make, the more we risk breaking our infrastructure, but Rackspace support has made it possible for us to keep transforming our operations while maintaining a high standard of service for our customers."

When managing its own infrastructure, Apsis had to monitor forums for updates regarding security vulnerabilities and then apply patches themselves. Now, that's all taken care of. "It's a huge benefit not having to think about the hosting," says Hong. "We get notifications when security updates need to be made, and it's a painless process to schedule them automatically for when it will cause minimal or no disruption. I think it's so cool that Rackspace monitor our hard drives and alert us when a drive is predicted to fail. They just ask for our permission to replace it. It's so quick and easy. If we had to do it ourselves, changing a piece of hardware would slow us down too much."

Templates provide a consistent and repeatable approach to maintenance. "When we have maintenance requests, the process is always the same and I know what to expect," says Hong. "The templated process helps to prevent any misunderstandings and gives us a chance to ask questions and understand more about the work."

Apsis works with several different support teams from different companies, but Rackspace stands out for its streamlined processes and expertise, according to Hong. "I notice the processes with Rackspace are so easy. They always have someone who knows the answer, and it's not like they are reading from a script or just following a series of prompts from a handbook: I know they are really solving my unique challenge."

He adds: "It's great to know that in the background, a large team is communicating with each other in the data centre at Rackspace, and with us, to ensure that our services are not disrupted."

A platform for innovation

"With the peace of mind of the stable private cloud environment provided by Rackspace, we can focus on creating new applications instead of spending resources and time on maintaining a scalable and secure environment," says Hong. Apsis is now working on new ways for customers to enrich their data, so they can better personalise their campaigns, among other projects.

Securing customer data

When you're processing personal data, including email addresses, security is a top priority. "Our customers keep data about their customers with us – it couldn't be more high value to them," says Hong. "You hear about a lot of breaches and vulnerabilities that could destroy businesses. We feel confident to know we have Rackspace behind us, looking after our platform security. When we get security audits through from customers doing due diligence, the requirements can be stringent. We can tick many of the boxes thanks to the security of the environment at Rackspace."

A trusted relationship

Apsis and Rackspace have been working together for over five years and have a close working relationship. With 90% of Apsis customers using the Apsis Pro platform and storing sensitive customer data using it, Rackspace is an important partner for Apsis.

"Rackspace absolutely helps us to future-proof our business," says Hong. "Rackspace is completely plugged in to the front line of cloud technology. We know that they will keep us up to date on evolving best practices, potential optimisations, and any new developments we should know about."

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About Rackspace

At Rackspace, we accelerate the value of the cloud during every phase of digital transformation. By managing apps, data, security and multiple clouds, we are the best choice to help customers get to the cloud, innovate with new technologies and maximise their IT investments. As a recognised Gartner Magic Quadrant leader, we are uniquely positioned to close the gap between the complex reality of today and the promise of tomorrow. Passionate about customer success, we provide unbiased expertise, based on proven results, across all the leading technologies. And across every interaction worldwide, we deliver Fanatical Experience™ — the best customer service experience in the industry. Rackspace has been honoured within the top 100 Great Places to Work for more than a decade.

Learn more at **www.rackspace.com**