

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

For Pickles, disruption takes many forms in the rapidly changing automotive industry

Pickles invests in a multi-cloud strategy to futureproof against the changing asset remarketing industry.

BUSINESS

Pickles is Australia's No. 1 auction and valuation specialist and a trusted asset remarketing partner. In the last financial year Pickles sold over \$2.6 billion in assets, with 41% of purchases made online through PicklesLIVE.

CHALLENGES

With customers increasingly demanding more from digital services, Pickles' existing managed private cloud service was limited in its interoperability and flexibility in connecting to current public cloud services for optimal scalability.

SOLUTION

Rackspace® Fanatical Support for VMware and Microsoft® Azure

OUTCOME

Pickles partnered with Rackspace to deploy a hybrid cloud strategy that combines the benefits of a private cloud utilising VMware's software-defined data centre (SDDC) and a Disaster Recovery solution employing Rackspace and Microsoft technologies.

Pickles





A family run business since 1964

Pickles is Australia's No. 1 auction and valuation specialist and a trusted asset remarketing partner. On behalf of vendors, Pickles sells cars, motorbikes, farming and agricultural equipment, mining, earthmoving and mobile plant, truck and transport, salvage assets, caravans, boats and other recreational goods. Pickles' major clients include the Australian government, local councils, fleet and lease companies, insurance companies, financial institutions and not-for-profit organisations. In the last financial year, Pickles sold over \$2.6 billion in assets, with 41% of purchases made to online buyers through PicklesLIVE.

Rethinking the approach to cloud in evolving landscapes

As a direct result of investing in technology at an early stage, Pickles' application environment was aging by the year 2010. The rapidly evolving digital environment, particularly in the automotive and fleet space, was changing the way businesses and consumers buy and sell. Pickles recognised the need to provide more digitally-led customer experiences as a priority.

According to Simon Meyrick, CIO at Pickles, Pickles was previously heading down the path of a traditional and expensive enterprise resource planning (ERP) structure.

"We quickly realised that the world was rapidly changing in terms of technology and the cloud space. We needed to seriously rethink our approach, knowing a big part of our new digital

strategy would be cloud-first and mobile-first," Meyrick noted.

Pickles is taking a holistic approach to proactively managing disruption in the asset remarketing space – from aggressive development and adoption of new tools and technologies, to actively addressing emerging trends like autonomous cars, and a commitment to continual improvement of its customers' online experience. Technology has been instrumental in the growth of Pickles.

"We have a couple of key systems that were developed in house that are very innovative, and have really set us apart from our competition, including our long-standing auction system which enables buyers to bid from anywhere using a real-time simulcast solution and PAIRS, a vendor portal that gives clients the ability to manage their assets in real-time. These systems have given us a great springboard to attract and manage clients nationally," Meyrick added.

However, the Pickles team realised that to continue to combat market disruption and remain a leader would require further investments in technology to meet market demands and futureproof the business. It had an incredible amount of data to leverage, but needed the right technology in place in order to embrace new digital offerings.

Pickles had been operating in a hybrid private cloud/on-premises system for several years. This restricted environment meant it lacked the flexibility and scalability required to meet increasing customer expectations. It had been experiencing a steady growth in the

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SIMON MEYRICK :: CIO, PICKLES.



number of online buyers and Meyrick knew the solution would come down to a more robust cloud approach.

Following a review of the core business drivers and strategy, in the context of a rapidly changing technology landscape, Pickles went to market seeking a flexible, scalable partner who could address the current challenges and also provide expert guidance into the future.

After shortlisting several organisations, Pickles selected Rackspace based on its depth of cross-cloud skills, and its breadth of knowledge to assess and tailor a solution for Pickles' particular digital transformation requirements.

"Rackspace was the ideal fit for our hybrid public cloud strategy and a good, strong partner to help with our transformation," said Meyrick.

One cloud doesn't fit all in the journey to digital transformation

The transformation needed to occur over a few phases. With many of Pickles ongoing projects in D365 and Office 365, a move of core, default workloads to Microsoft Azure made sense.

Pickles also moved from its legacy private cloud/on-premises VMware environment into Rackspace's VMware platform, with a software-defined data centre (SDDC) for more flexibility. Rackspace then designed a solution that allowed Pickles to have more connectivity between the new VMware environment and Microsoft Azure, including Disaster Recovery resulting in an immediate reduction in cost.

"We quickly learned that a single cloud wasn't going to work for us. We had our existing application environment for a long time; it had been developed over many years and was not easily transferable into the cloud," noted Meyrick.

The fully managed multi-cloud solution, a combination of hybrid cloud in both Microsoft Azure public cloud and VMware private cloud, gives Pickles the security and stability of hybrid cloud with the flexibility of public cloud. It also gave its IT team a single control centre across all environments, providing full insight and multiple touchpoints into control, access and reporting. On Rackspace's recommendation, Pickles chose to leverage 'managed' and 'un-managed' environments within the SDDC to provide a test and develop environment with interaction from Rackspace as needed with standard SLAs.

Solid partnerships and expertise on the road to digital transformation

With this bespoke multi-cloud solution, Pickles is now able to scale quickly, particularly around pace and onboarding infrastructure. According to Meyrick, simply being able to buy new workloads and commission new environments is significantly faster than it used to be. There is also a new ability to build elastic and scalable architecture, which is proving to be a huge benefit to Pickles by supporting a growing number of visitors to its digital platform which exceeds 10 million page views each month.

Pickles has also leveraged the ability to scale



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SIMON MEYRICK :: CIO, PICKLES



"WE'RE CONTINUING ON OUR DIGITAL JOURNEY, SO THERE'S GOING TO BE A HUGE AMOUNT OF WORK FOR RACKSPACE AND PICKLES TO COLLABORATE ON. DURING OUR CURRENT PHASE OF TRANSFORMATION, WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER ON AUTOMATION, PACE, AND IMPROVING OUR CUSTOMERS' ONLINE EXPERIENCE. IT'S NOT A REVOLUTION BUT A CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION AND WE'RE IN A GOOD PLACE TO LEVERAGE EVERYTHING CLOUD OFFERS – NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE."

SIMON MEYRICK :: CIO, PICKLES



applications and workloads, with a net result of significantly better-performing and more reliable applications.

"We've had a massive amount of improvement in terms of performance, such as page load time. We benchmark ourselves against competitor and industry websites and we're definitely now one of the leaders in our market in terms of performance," said Meyrick.

According to Meyrick, the small size of the team at Pickles driving the cloud journey was another reason Rackspace's involvement was so crucial.

"We required a whole bunch of new skills. Rackspace removed the need to recruit or up-skill our staff to gain these new skills. We can now leverage Rackspace's expert capabilities."

As Pickles continues to execute its business strategy and tackle its market competition head on, the longer-term plan is to move more of its applications into Microsoft Azure with Rackspace at the helm. It is investigating how to enhance the digital offerings for its wide range of buyer personas.

ABOUT RACKSPACE

Rackspace is a leading provider of IT-as-a-service in today's multi-cloud world. It delivers expert advice and integrated managed services across applications, data, security and infrastructure, including public and private clouds and managed hosting. Rackspace partners with every leading technology provider, including Alibaba, AWS, Google, Microsoft, OpenStack, Oracle, SAP, and VMware. The company is uniquely positioned to provide unbiased expertise on which technologies will best serve each customer's needs. Rackspace was named a leader in the 2017 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Public Cloud Infrastructure Managed Service Providers, Worldwide and has been honoured by Fortune, Glassdoor and others as one of the best places to work. Based in San Antonio, Texas, Rackspace serves more than 140,000 business customers from data centres on five continents.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com.au

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