Delivering a tailored online gifting experience

By migrating to AWS and employing new automated processes, Buyatab experienced an 80% boost in performance.

Our customer

Buyatab is a leading supplier of advanced online gift card infrastructure, technology and marketing services for leading brands.

The obstacles they faced

Buyatab needed to find a smart way to transform from its startup-phase infrastructure into a scalable and flexible IT environment on AWS — while achieving cost and time savings.

How we helped

Business/IT Transformation; Professional Services: DevOps; Managed Public Cloud — Amazon Web Services (AWS), AWS IAM, Amazon EC2, Amazon EBS, AWS ELBs, AWS System Manager, AWS AutoScaling, Amazon S3 and Amazon SES.

What we achieved together

Rackspace helped Buyatab automate its time-intensive manual processes, which improved consistency, availability and security. When Buyatab completed its final cutover to AWS from the existing data center, process performance jumped by 80%.

buyatab

> *"The Onica team worked as true partners with Buyatab. They became a part of our team and when Buyatab didn't have project management resources to dedicate to the migration, Onica provided one who drove the team in a smart and effective way."*

Chris Falk
CTO, Buyatab

Digital gift-giving services

Buyatab, a Vancouver-based supplier of advanced online gift card infrastructure, technology and marketing services for leading brands in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia, is growing at a rapid pace. Ranked number two on PROFIT 500: The Complete Ranking of Canada's Fastest-Growing Companies in 2017 and number three the year before, Buyatab is making its mark.

Buyatab started its business on traditional managed hosting with a monolithic application stack featuring .NET and SQL. In order to meet and exceed the new expectations and demands of an expanding customer base, Buyatab needed to find a smart way to transform from a startup-phase infrastructure into a scalable and flexible IT environment.

Buyatab's technology team also recognized that the company needed to make a transition toward continuous deployment.

Choosing the right platform

Because Buyatab was heavily invested in Microsoft products, the technology team initiated a three-month "bake off" between Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services Cloud (AWS).

"What it came down to is that at every level AWS was a better choice for us," said Falk.

In order to plan a smooth migration, Falk knew from experience that the best option was to engage with a smart and seasoned partner that both understood AWS and could help educate Buyatab's staff as it leveraged AWS and adopted a DevOps culture.

The right technology, the right partner

"I would never engage in such a significant transformation without an experienced partner, and there's no question that in Canada, Onica is the very best — there's no other company as experienced working with the cloud out there," said Falk, noting that Onica is an AWS Premier Consulting Partner.

Onica implemented a migration plan for the main Microsoft-based application stack into AWS. Together, Onica and Buyatab automated all environment management tasks using Powershell to orchestrate provisioning with AWS CloudFormation templates, and Powershell DSC and CredStash for Configuration/Secret Management.

Additionally, Onica created a CI/CD pipeline using Bamboo and AWS CodeDeploy to help deploy code changes to newly

created environments for more robust and isolated testing.

Onica also helped the Buyatab team leverage cloud services like AWS IAM, Amazon EC2, Amazon EBS, AWS ELBs and AWS System Manager as well as AWS AutoScaling, Amazon S3 and Amazon SES instead of using their own services to realize improved efficiencies in scaling.

Multiple AWS accounts and VPCs were used to host application environments as well as a shared services environment for centralized tools.

And when Buyatab didn't have project management resources to dedicate to the migration, Onica provided one who, as Falk describes it, "drove the team in a smart and effective way."

Building skills and confidence

The Onica team worked side by side with the Buyatab team, providing iterative learning throughout the project. For example, the Onica team mentored Buyatab staff using peer code reviews with the internal DevOps Manager in order to instill both skills and confidence along the way.

In fact, a DevOps culture has been embraced and is helping the Buyatab team become more agile and able to deploy application updates with a much higher level of consistency and significantly less effort. The application stacks have higher levels of recovery and availability, and they will scale much easier to match seasonal workloads.

As a provider of branded gift card ecommerce experiences for companies around the world, Buyatab's infrastructure needed to be rock-solid during the exceptionally busy gift-buying holidays and seasons.

Onica worked closely with the team to help ensure that there was no disruption during those important periods for Buyatab.

Results and benefits

The migration wasn't a "lift and shift," but rather a fully transformational migration that allowed Buyatab to take advantage of features within AWS that simply aren't available anywhere else, including storage service capabilities, a sophisticated architecture and highly advanced security features.

"This is a level of infrastructure that most technology organizations could only fantasize about," said Falk.

With Onica, the company worked to change some existing applications in order to take full advantage of AWS offerings.

Onica worked with Buyatab to turn some time-intensive manual processes into automated processes, which improved consistency, availability and security. When Buyatab completed its final cutover to AWS from their existing data center, the 60-minute procedure was performed 25 minutes faster than planned.

Since the migration, Buyatab has seen significant improvements to storage, architecture, networking and security, as well as improved reliability, a high level of redundancy, continuity and disaster recovery. Documentation has been created to help with the onboarding of new staff, and to track and document design decisions.

Additionally, AWS Systems Manager is being leveraged to help make routine tasks easier, and log collection and metric data is being collected centrally to provide additional visibility, with enhanced capabilities for analysis on the roadmap.

Perhaps the biggest benefit is the avoidance of a massive capital outlay that would have been required for an on-premises solution.

"There's sometimes chatter about how expensive the cloud could be," said Falk. "But that expense happens with over provisioning in what you require and not using best practices. When you're working with a partner that has years of experience, like Onica, you simply don't make those kinds of mistakes."

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 maximize their IT investments. As a recognized 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™. Rackspace has been honored by Fortune, Forbes, Glassdoor and others as one of the best places to work.

Learn more at **www.rackspace.com** or call **1-800-961-2888**.