Supporting Relay42 to deliver up to 500,000 customer data events per second

Rackspace Technology and AWS provide Relay42 with the capabilities to deliver personalised messages and experiences to end users in a matter of seconds.

Our customer

Dutch-headquartered Relay42 turns data into meaningful relationships for customers including Air France-KLM, Heineken, Mazda and FedEx. The company's data management solutions integrate AI and orchestration capabilities to enable brands to unify all of their customer data, to predict behaviour and engage them at any moment with truly personalised journeys.

The obstacles they faced

Now orchestrating up to half a million events per second in busy periods, Relay42 needed a flexible and scalable infrastructure to maintain service excellence and continue to drive innovation. With many customers in the Financial Services industry, regulatory compliance is also key for their business, as well as ensuring they have the platform capabilities to deal with customer demand as they continue their global expansion.

How we helped

Managed Public Cloud, Managed Services for AWS, Rackspace Service Blocks™, CloudHealth by VMware.

What we achieved together

Relay42 has been on a journey with Rackspace Technology, from a dedicated environment to AWS public cloud. Rackspace Technology has supported Relay42 scale their operations to support over 100 billion interactions each year. Rackspace Technology SLAs enable Relay42 meet compliance regulations and they benefit from expert help when it comes to accelerating innovation using AWS, whilst optimising their cloud environment. Rackspace Technology optimised Relay42's cloud spend (through CloudHealth by VMware) which identified cost savings of $8,000 per month in the initial months of the pandemic with zero impact on performance.

"Rackspace Technology is a support partner that — like us — is always looking ahead, moving with the times and bringing its customers with them. I value that kind of alignment immensely."

Rogier van Nieuwenhuizen,
CEO, Relay42

Enabling the future of customer experience

Relay42 counts among its customers some of Europe and Asia's most well-known brands from a diverse range of industries, including Air France-KLM, Heineken, Mazda and FedEx, which it serves from its offices in Amsterdam, Singapore and London.

The company's growth has coincided with a transformation in the way brands differentiate themselves in the digital era, when customer journeys take place across myriad online and offline channels. As Rogier van Nieuwenhuizen, CEO at Relay42, explains: "Customer experience has emerged as the primary source of differentiation for brands in the digital era. Our solutions equip customers to integrate data from online and offline sources to drive personalised and predictive, multichannel experiences in real time. In this way they can create meaningful and tailored moments at the individual level, even across a customer base of millions."

For Relay42, orchestrating the journeys of half a billion consumers each year involves connecting thousands of systems to process more than 60,000 events per second, rising to 500,000 per second during busy holiday periods.

And to make this happen, it relies on the AWS public cloud with Rackspace Technology as its primary technology partner.

A technology partner for speed and scale

Initially looking to be free of the burden of managing its own infrastructure, Relay42 moved to the Rackspace Technology private cloud before migrating to Rackspace Public Cloud on OpenStack® and then fully on to the AWS platform.

In that time, its requirements have evolved from a place where uptime was the priority to one where speed and scale have come to the fore.

"When we began the relationship, our internal KPIs were initially only concerned with maximising uptime," says van Nieuwenhuizen. "That was good enough then and we have never fallen short with Rackspace Technology. But today we demand more, because we're offering customers real-time journey orchestration. That means being able to send someone a personalised email, Facebook ad or SMS within two seconds of a particular data event being triggered, even if that trigger happens off the customer's website."

To enable this, Relay42's hands-on engineering team integrates hundreds of systems by utilising a huge range of AWS services and with the support of Rackspace Technology. On the compute and storage side, these services include, EC2 and S3 instances with load balancing. For data streaming, the company relies heavily on AWS Kinesis and Kinesis Firehose. Meanwhile, it uses AWS SageMaker for machine learning innovations, the CodeDeploy and CodeBuild development tools, and AWS Inspector and AWS Shield for security.

At the same time it leverages Fanatical Experience™ from Rackspace Technology to provide a complementary layer of support and development expertise. "We stay hands-on with our AWS services, and really value the ability to spin up, test and either scale up or phase out services as required, in an automated way and without impacting our solution's uptime," says van Nieuwenhuizen. "But Rackspace Technology provides essential input on our work to ensure we benefit from its experience with AWS best practices."

Rackspace Technology combines the power of proactive, always-on service and expertise with best-in-class tools and automation to deliver technology when and how customers need it. "When delivering real-time services, a 24-hour SLA is not good enough," van Nieuwenhuizen says.

Keeping control of costs and compliance

By working with Rackspace Technology, Relay42 also has access to VMware's CloudHealth tooling for automated cloud cost optimisation. The solution enables Relay42 to precisely track cloud spend by cost centre, tagging resources and services to create easy-to-use dashboards that show where both spend and CPU resources are

being allocated. With this extra level of intelligence, it recently saved $8,000 per month on its compute spend without losing any performance.

"With CloudHealth tooling we feel in complete control of our infrastructure."

Rogier van Nieuwenhuizen, CEO, Relay42

Security and compliance is another area where the partnership with Rackspace Technology helps Relay42 feel in control. The company has a complex ecosystem in this regard, featuring multiple vendor solutions for vulnerability scanning and several security-related AWS services, and it has strict obligations that come with processing customer data.

The presence of a data protection agreement with Rackspace Technology supports these obligations and more, and has proved vital to maintaining R42's high levels of uptime and performance. That's because the agreement allows it to share data around support issues in complete confidence, as van Nieuwenhuizen explains: "The DPA means that we can simply copy and paste the entire history of any issue into our support tickets safe in the knowledge we're staying compliant. So instead of worrying about what we can and can't share, we can jump straight into engaging Rackspace Technology to help us solve the problem."

Synergies for the future

Already active in 20 countries and growing every year, Relay42 aims to double the size of its European and Asian business in 2021 with support from the global footprint of Rackspace Technology. As part of the ongoing engagement, it also aims to continue its

cloud native journey by further utilising more services from AWS, and Rackspace Technology will help them navigate their innovation strategy.

This will be a continuation of synergies that have always been present in the relationship between the two companies, according to van Nieuwenhuizen. "Relay42's transformational culture mirrors that of Rackspace Technology as we both constantly evolve to meet customer demands," he says. "As recently as five years ago, customer journeys were relatively small scale with limited touchpoints. Today, they happen at tremendous scale and we are one of only a few companies that, firstly, anticipated that scale and, secondly, have been able to rise to the challenge.

"This is all made possible through AWS and the Fanatical Experience that Rackspace Technology delivers," van Nieuwenhuizen adds. "And they too have grown with us in that time, from a cloud provider to a full-service, multicloud integrator providing relevant services in all possible clouds. That shows to me that Rackspace Technology is a support partner that — like us — is always looking ahead, moving with the times and bringing its customers with them. I value that kind of alignment immensely."

About Rackspace Technology

Rackspace Technology is the multicloud solutions expert. We combine our expertise with the world's leading technologies — across applications, data and security — to deliver end-to-end solutions. We have a proven record of advising customers based on their business challenges, designing solutions that scale, building and managing those solutions, and optimising returns into the future.

As a global, multicloud technology services pioneer, we deliver innovative cloud capabilities to help customers build new revenue streams, increase efficiency and create incredible experiences. Recognised as a best place to work, year after year, by Fortune, Forbes, Great Places to Work and Glassdoor, we attract and develop world-class talent to deliver the best expertise to our customers. Everything we do is underpinned by an obsession with our customers' success — our Fanatical Experience™ — so they can work faster, smarter and stay ahead of what's next.

Learn more at **www.rackspace.com/en-gb** or call UK: **+44 203 553 6268**