Tyres4U disrupts traditional tyre sales models with public cloud

Consumers and resellers across Australia have easy access to the exact tyres they need for commercial and consumer applications.

Our customer

Tyres4U is an Australian owned and operated organisation specialising in the import and distribution of tyres and tubes for multiple tyre brands.

The obstacles they faced

Tyres4U needed to add an ecommerce component to its offerings, find a durable solution for its hosting environment and future-proof its business.

How we helped

IT/Business Transformation; Rackspace Professional Services — Migration Assistance; Managed Public Cloud — Microsoft® Azure®; Rackspace Application Services — Sitecore®

What we achieved together

Tyres4U revolutionised tyre distribution by leveraging Sitecore and Azure to offer an online retail platform on cloud-based infrastructure.

Driving change and disruption in a slowly changing industry

In order to meet the needs of tyre retailers and consumers in the digital era, Tyres4U launched its TyresRight brand back in 2011. As the new brand started to partner with more distributors and sealed deals with some of the largest motoring clubs in Australia, it decided to bring more convenience to Australian drivers and their distribution ecosystem by building an online ecommerce platform.

This was a revolutionary initiative at the time. Tyres4U was the first tyre distributor in the world to build an online booking engine that allowed customers to pick and pay for tyres online and get them installed at their preferred and nearest tyre retailer. But disrupting the market meant having to rethink Tyres4U's IT infrastructure and hosting environment completely.

Answering the needs of customers and retailers in the digital age

In today's digital world, car owners want convenience. A seven- to 10-day window to have a tyre changed is no longer acceptable with customers. Consumers want to get back on the road quickly and don't want to spend hours looking for the nearest tyre retailer then have to leave their car there for days.

"Today, we estimate that 28% of all vehicles on the road in Australia need to change at least one tyre," said Daniel Wright, Chief Digital Officer at Tyres4U. "This represents a huge business opportunity for our retailing partners. They need to be able to rely on an online platform that can connect them directly to consumers and help them in their purchase and payment journeys, so that they only have to drop their car off to their preferred and nearest retailer for a few hours while the tyres they picked and paid for online are being installed."

Tyres4U had two main drivers behind setting up an online commerce platform. The first was to improve the overall customer journey, and the second was to help its partners expand their customer base and memberships. In addition, the company was also looking to future-proof its business and prepare for the data-driven and autonomous car era. The company also realized that its IT infrastructure was becoming unstable. As a result, it was time to take a leap and move to a cloud environment that could support scalability, manage heavy traffic peaks and support rapid load and response times. Tyres4U also needed a solution that leveraged new technology that could help it compete through disruptions to its industry.

"Building a strong ecommerce platform and moving to a cloud model was vital for Tyres4U, as we wanted to future-proof the business to meet new customers' needs and build capabilities that will enable us to tap into the autonomous cars and AI era in the future."

Daniel Wright, Chief Digital Officer, Tyres4U

"We're operating in an industry that is highly digitised and increasingly impacted by new technologies such as AI," Wright said. "It was clear for us that a combined ecommerce and cloud-based platform was the way to go if we wanted to prepare for what's ahead of us in terms of autonomous cars and personalised and omnichannel customer journeys."

Because Tyres4U deals with large retailers and consumers, it was also important to move to an environment that provided strong data privacy and reliable disaster recovery features.

Opening doors to new business opportunities

Tyres4U relied on Rackspace to deploy a Sitecore platform that would be the foundation of its ecommerce offering.

The online platform needed to solve for two challenges. First, it needed to allow Tyres4U partners to grow their existing business by offering a way to connect with car owners quickly and easily. Secondly, it had to be user-friendly and help Tyres4U retailers to design compelling and effective customer journeys and communications, personalised to each individual's needs across multiple channels.

With the help of Rackspace ecommerce experts, Tyres4U deployed a Sitecore ecommerce platform to help its growing partner network present their products and services offering online. This allowed customers to easily shop a wide range of tyres, find the product that best suited their needs, pay for their tyres online and identify the nearest retailer at which to have their tyres installed.

"Tyres are very technical, and most drivers, unfortunately, often go with the cheapest and most convenient option rather than pick the right tyre suited to their specific needs," explained Wright. "But tyres are directly linked to driver safety, so it was important for us to make it easy and convenient for people to choose the right product, at the cheapest rate, directly from their phone or computer."

Rackspace understood that the platform also had to be easily accessible and simple to use for end users, who might be in emergency situations and need urgent assistance. The Rackspace team helped design a Sitecore platform that would help drivers access information conveniently.

For example, Tyres4U wanted to facilitate customer interactions simply through a quick Google search on their phone. It built the ecommerce platform with a mobile-first mindset and with user-behaviour monitoring features to help fine tune the user experience.

"Working with Rackspace has been a game changer for us," Wright said. "The team not only has strong technical expertise, it is also staffed by subject matter experts in the ecommerce field, for example, who know exactly how to build a technology platform that can address specific business and consumer needs." Rackspace was able to address Tyres4U's need for high availability, rapid load times and full scalability to support the business as it grows.

"Rackspace provided more than just technical expertise. The team helped us change our collaboration mindset internally, and helped us answer business and technology challenges as a team, ensuring every initiative was a win-win initiative for every stakeholder involved."

Daniel Wright, Chief Digital Officer, Tyres4U

Adding the power of Microsoft Azure

As Tyres4U's hosting agreement was about to expire, the company had to make a critical decision. It needed to choose a new environment that would integrate with its Sitecore platform, as well as, support the brand's digital evolution for the future. It turned to Rackspace for advice and decided to turn to a public cloud environment based on Microsoft® Azure®.

"Trust is core to our values and at the heart of the tyres and road safety industry," explained Wright. "We needed a new hosting environment that our team, partners and end customers could trust — a platform highly reliable and able to cater to different needs and manage traffic peaks as our ecommerce platform kept growing." Leveraging Microsoft Azure with Rackspace expertise yielded a private cloud environment that is highly reliable, scalable, meets the retailer's needs and includes 24/7 support. The Microsoft Azure platform also offered Tyres4U strong data compliance features and a disaster recovery component — two key requirements for Tyres4U and its partners.

Making IT and marketing collaboration a reality

Ultimately, delivering personalised customer experiences and offering retailers the ability to communicate with their audience with compelling messages through multiple channels — including mobile — goes beyond the realm of pure technology. Rackspace experts were at the core of Tyres4U's digital transformation, which, in the end, boosted collaboration between IT and marketing departments.

Today, Tyres4U's marketing and IT teams are working in tandem, using both the Sitecore platform and the Microsoft Azure environment to identify key customer and business insights, reach common goals, evaluate the success of various initiatives and build a shared knowledge hub. "Working alongside Rackspace's experts has enabled us to create trust and understanding amongst our teams and commit to the same goals, towards the same vision," added Wright.

Future-proofing the business for the autonomous cars and AI era

Moving to a Sitecore and Microsoft Azure environment means that Tyres4U was able to bring high availability to its platform, as well as rapid load times and full scalability to support the business and partnering retailers as they grow. "Moving to an ecommerce model and to a public cloud environment with the support of Rackspace has unlocked incredible opportunities for our ecosystem and inspired the entire tyre distribution industry to embrace digital change," Wright said.

This digital-first mindset means that Tyres4U is now able to provide solutions to customers at exactly the time they need them by offering products and services on multiple channels, anywhere and anytime. This customer-centric view has become a key differentiator for Tyres4U and its partners.

"This first stage of our digital transformation has been instrumental in changing the way we operate and serve our partners and customers," said Wright. "But it has also built the foundation so we can move to our next phase of transformation and growth. The tyre industry is about to be disrupted by the arrival of a new generation of autonomous cars and predictive maintenance powered by artificial intelligence. With data-driven and AI-powered technologies, it will soon be possible to read tyre pressures, monitor performance in real time and extend the longevity of tyres for more safety on Australian roads," he added.

Thanks to data analytics and automation, it will be easier to understand drivers' habits, answer their questions and even predict their needs, while offering them outstanding customer service. Because of its cloud-first approach and its public cloud environment based on Microsoft Azure, Tyres4U is well positioned to maximise the value of customer data and lead the race in predictive maintenance. It's also starting to look at how to use the power of the Internet of Things (IoT) to make autonomous cars safer.

"Using the latest technology advancements with the help of the right experts, we want to make Australia's roads and drivers safer than ever before," concluded Wright.

About Rackspace

Rackspace is modernizing IT in today's multi-cloud world. By delivering IT-as-a-service, we help customers of all industries, sizes and locations realize the power of digital transformation without the complexity and expense of managing it on their own. Our comprehensive portfolio of managed services across applications, data, security and infrastructure on the world's leading public and private cloud platforms enables us to provide unbiased expertise. Rackspace has been honored by Fortune, Forbes, Glassdoor and others as one of the best places to work.

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