



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

# PREMIER TEAM MANAGEMENT APP IMPROVES USER EXPERIENCE WITH MOVE TO PRIVATE CLOUD

TeamSnap enjoys greater security and scalability to support continued growth by shifting to a Rackspace private cloud platform.

## BUSINESS

TeamSnap is an award-winning web and mobile service that helps sports teams and other activity-based groups stay organized and have more fun.

## CHALLENGES

Improve security and run rates with a scalable platform that helps ensure service availability during peak traffic seasons.

## SOLUTION

Rackspace OpenStack Private Cloud

## OUTCOME

By migrating from the public cloud to a cost-effective Rackspace OpenStack Private Cloud solution, TeamSnap enjoys faster load times and greater security with the ability to scale on demand.



What began in 2009 as a simple software solution to manage sports teams has grown into a wildly popular web and mobile application, with nearly 15 million users in 196 countries.

Founded by social scientists, an improv comedian and an oil field engineer, TeamSnap makes group organization as easy as click, tap and go. Instead of juggling spreadsheets and phone trees, athletes, coaches, scoutmasters, youth group leaders, sorority sisters and sheep herders can use automated scheduling and communication tools to manage their crew any time and anywhere. Explains TeamSnap Chief Growth Officer Ken McDonald, "It keeps everybody on the same page about where they've got to be, what uniform to wear, what field they're on, who's bringing the orange slices, and what the score is as the game is played."

TeamSnap averages 200,000 new users each month, and the company is working diligently to add features that meet the needs of its growing customer base. Most recently, TeamSnap rolled out the TeamSnap Live! instant messaging tool, which lets parents and fans enjoy the live experience when they can't attend the game, and lets coaches send updates to team members on the fly. Because of the seasonal nature of different sports and the promise of instant, real-time connectivity, TeamSnap demands a flexible and scalable hosting platform that helps ensure customers have a positive experience around the clock and around the world.

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*"We really have to have an infrastructure that can just scale up when we need it."*

**FRANK WATERVOORT** :: CHIEF ENGINEERING OFFICER, TEAMSAP

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## Going Mobile

After starting as a web solution with a few thousand fans, TeamSnap now supports close to 15 million global customers who use the mobile capabilities to manage and organize their teams and activity-based groups. The service has been adopted by 1 million teams

worldwide, and customers send nearly 5 million push notifications daily through TeamSnap Live!

"Different sports have different seasons and different areas. Sometimes, it's hard to know how much the application needs to scale for a given month," says Frank Watervoort, Chief Engineering Officer at TeamSnap, adding, "We really have to have an infrastructure that can just scale up when we need it."

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*"If we didn't have the ability to just turn on additional servers to scale up and know that the infrastructure is always going to be available, it could throw our growth off-track."*

**KEN MCDONALD** :: CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER, TEAMSAP

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TeamSnap was operating on a Rackspace public cloud when Watervoort came on board in 2013, leveraging the platform's networking and load balancing capabilities to manage fluctuating traffic flows. Security and flexibility were key concerns, however, leading TeamSnap to explore changing to a private cloud solution. Says Watervoort, "My top priority as Chief Engineering Officer is to make sure that we have good performance and great security at a competitive price."

## Making a Move

The company's rapid growth and plans for continued expansion provided a further impetus to shift to private cloud, and staying with Rackspace allowed for a seamless migration with no disruption of service for TeamSnap's loyal user base.

"Once you start growing and you get customers interested, it's hard to turn off the faucet," says McDonald, adding that scalability needs to be baked into the architecture for web and mobile apps. "Many times, we've turned on [features], and suddenly the volume has shot up by ten times in a matter of weeks. If we didn't have the

ability to just turn on additional servers to scale up and know that the infrastructure is always going to be available, it could throw our growth off-track."

Rackspace OpenStack Private Cloud was an obvious choice once the company saw what the migration path would look like, says Watervoort, adding that Rackspace engineers delivered fanatical support throughout the process. "From the customer's perspective, it was a completely transparent migration, which was just amazing," adds McDonald. "We had a relatively short planned maintenance window. We got through it and, boom, we never looked back. It was an awesome transition," he says.

## Improving Performance

TeamSnap was able to baseline its server needs based on non-peak hours using Rackspace OpenStack Private Cloud, and leverage RackConnect with the public cloud to scale on demand during periods of high traffic, explains Watervoort. "We use that in conjunction with an algorithm that we developed that actually anticipates the load, rather than reacting to the load," he says, adding, "Our customers see great response times, whether they're using the mobile app or web application."

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**KEN MCDONALD** :: CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER, TEAMSAP

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Although public cloud was performant, TeamSnap's ability to do customization outside of OpenStack for its database servers was limited, notes TeamSnap Database Administrator Tim Soderstrom. Rackspace support engineers provided much-needed guidance while still giving TeamSnap flexibility in setting up the network. "We could then put together VMs and OpenStack with flavors that were fitting

of the application we need, knowing that some applications needed more memory but less CPU than others, and conversely, that some needed more disc but didn't need any CPU."

As a result, TeamSnap could pack VMs more efficiently, and ultimately get fewer and smaller servers, which improved the run rate. "From the customer experience, we got faster load times, lower latencies, and just an overall more refined experience," Soderstrom says.

## Reaping Added Benefits

RackSpace OpenStack Private Cloud also provided enhanced security to safeguard customer data and prevent any disruption in service. "We had good security in public cloud, but we wanted a bit more separation," notes Soderstrom. Private cloud provides multiple layers of protection, with the ability to put certain functions behind physical hardware, like F5 firewalls, he says.

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**TIM SODERSTROM** :: DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR, TEAMSNAPE

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Likewise, standardizing on a platform with wide industry support has freed up TeamSnap to focus internal resources on the core business, rather than managing different tools or internal servers. Says McDonald, "The fact that we know that private cloud has got our back allows people like myself on the business side to focus on how we get more customers, without worrying that the car is starting to run out of gas."

Migrating the company to a private cloud platform, Rackspace engineers delivered fanatical support to help TeamSnap create even

more innovative tools that let millions of users worldwide tame the logistical nightmare of team management.

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## ABOUT RACKSPACE

Rackspace, the #1 managed cloud company, helps businesses tap the power of cloud computing without the complexity and cost of managing it on their own. Rackspace engineers deliver specialized expertise, easy-to-use tools, and Fanatical Support® for leading technologies developed by AWS, Google, Microsoft, OpenStack, VMware and others. The company serves customers in 150 countries, including more than half of the FORTUNE 100. Rackspace is a leader in the 2017 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Public Cloud Infrastructure Managed Service Providers, Worldwide, and has been honored by Fortune, Forbes and others as one of the best companies to work for.

Learn more at [www.rackspace.com](http://www.rackspace.com) or call us at **1-800-961-2888**.

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SEPTEMBER 1, 2017

