VCE

CLIENT
Skyscape Cloud Services

CHALLENGE
Quickly build market share from new entrant position

Satisfy the most demanding requirements for security, sustainability, and compliance

SOLUTION
Vblock System to deliver tiered, multi-tenant cloud services

RESULTS
Secured UK government procurement framework status
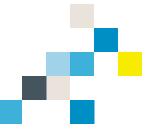
Won significant new business in just 10 months

SKYSCAPE CAPTURES MARKET WITH NEW CLOUD SERVICES

NEW ENTRANT'S CLOUD OFFERING ATTRACTS GROWING PUBLIC SECTOR CLIENT LIST

Founded in 2011, Skyscape Cloud Services saw a new market opportunity in the UK government initiative to leverage cloud computing to address IT efficiency and quality of service. To capture a spot in the government's procurement framework and have access to the market, Skyscape had to quickly deploy a reliable infrastructure to host flexible services at competitive prices.

Skyscape built energy efficient data centers running Vblock™ Systems as the foundation of their new cloud services. The rapidly growing company leverages innovative technology to deliver cost effective services and to provide flexible pricing based on actual use. This model ensures Skyscape customers a cost-effective IT solution scaled to their unique requirements.

In 2012, Skyscape became one of the first cloud providers to be awarded a place on the UK government procurement framework. Its energy efficient data centers support not only state and devolved government departments, but also a number of high-profile military and national security organizations.

> "In the 1980s the automotive industry showed that by designing quality upfront, you get quality at scale. Essentially we're applying this approach to cloud, so **the underlying infrastructure has to provide very strong orchestration and automation capabilities. And that's exactly what we got from VCE**."
>
> *— Simon Hansford*
> *CTO Skyscape*

The Challenge

New market entrant, Skyscape Cloud Services, was looking to form an alliance with a select group of technology partners. Skyscape CEO, Phil Dawson, says: "As the UK public sector transitions to new procurement framework agreements, we saw a huge opportunity to provide something different—a cloud model that really delivers on security, sustainability, and compliance."

To rapidly acquire customers, it needed a data center platform with pre-integrated compute, networking, and storage to form a foundation for multi-tenanted cloud solutions. UK public sector ICT projects are increasingly geared around consumption-based pricing. In response, the Skyscape portfolio includes a full range of infrastructure-as-a-service, platform-as-a-service, and software-as-a-service offerings.

The Solution

When it came to deciding who to partner with, and which platform to standardize on, Skyscape was equally clear minded. "In the 1980s the automotive industry showed that by designing quality upfront, you get quality at scale," explains Simon Hansford, CTO at Skyscape. "Essentially we're applying this approach to cloud, so the underlying infrastructure has to provide very strong orchestration and automation capabilities. And that's exactly what we got from VCE."

Spanning two Skyscape data centers, the Vblock Systems fuse together VMware virtualization, Cisco server and network technologies, and EMC VPLEX virtual storage as part of an active-active design. In the event that one virtual machine should fail, another virtual machine automatically takes over, ensuring no loss of connectivity or disruption for end users. We have four Vblock 300GX's in production. We separately have 2 300EXs for test & dev.

This highly available infrastructure allows Skyscape to offer assured tiered services: impact level one Unclassified information such as citizen facing websites; impact level two for Protected information that requires selective sharing; and impact level three for Restricted data such as health records, tax returns, and judicial information.

The Results

In the first 10 months of trading, Skyscape has won significant new business, including a high profile contract with Government Digital Services to help consolidate all central government websites and move to a single, more user-friendly domain. It was also appointed to provide cloud services for the Ministry of Defence and various police forces.

Services can be up and running in a matter of minutes after contract signing, thanks to the agility and ease of provisioning provided by Vblock Systems. The cloud provider enjoys total granular control over service delivery. "If the customer only wants to pay for one virtual machine for one hour we can do that," says Dawson. "And that's the beauty. They no longer have to build large data centers to cope with peak workloads, effectively over-paying for capacity they'll seldom use."

The provider has integrated VMware vCloud Suite with its own software layer to deliver the required automated orchestration and protective monitoring functionality. That means service delivery is less expensive.

"There's no doubt," says Hansford, "that running compute-as-a-service, the core engine of any cloud service, on a Vblock System lowers total cost of ownership." And that's great news for the company's customers who stand to save money by outsourcing their data center requirements to Skyscape.

"You can usually increase server utilization by between 30 and 50 percent by simply moving to a virtualized environment. That figure increases to between 70 and 80 percent when that environment is also multi-tenanted," concludes Dawson.