

CASE STUDY

CloudKey



OPENING DOORS:

HOSTWAY HELPS CLOUDKEY REACH A LARGER AUDIENCE

OVERVIEW

Cloudkey, a technology and consulting firm, designed a customer relationship management (CRM) solution which outgrew the constraints of its colocated servers. Needing to make its hosted infrastructure customizable at the customer level and accessible online, Cloudkey moved to Hostway's public cloud in November 2010. Hostway earned Cloudkey's business by clearly demonstrating they met each of Cloudkey's requirements at a fraction of the cost of colocation. In the two years since, Cloudkey's database product has successfully run entirely within Hostway's cloud, and Cloudkey has been extremely impressed with the level of service they receive.

BACKGROUND

Cloudkey built their CRM solution on colocated servers in 2008 at the behest of a single client. As use of the CRM system spread, Cloudkey's infrastructure was stretched to meet the requirements of its clients, who increasingly needed customized versions of the product and required online access.

"To satisfy all of our customers, it was becoming evident we'd have to make big changes to the application's functionality," said Cloudkey founder Scott Montgomery. "And while we were making big changes, we decided we might as well revisit our hosting plan as well."

With the cost of expanding his own system appearing prohibitive, Montgomery knew the direction he needed to move.

"From my perspective, there's no reason a company of our size and with our needs would go with dedicated servers unless they were required to by law," Montgomery said. "People worry about the risks of cloud vs. dedicated servers – in reality these risks are different but roughly equal. You can be the smartest IT architect around, and there are still going to be points of failure either way."

With the significant cost benefits of cloud service, the choice was easy for Cloudkey.

SOLUTION

Another point of emphasis for Cloudkey was downtime. A redundant solution had been beyond Cloudkey's reach before, but [Hostway's public cloud](#) guaranteed 100% uptime. Hostway provides a highly available environment on Hyper-V with failover clustering functionality inherent in its infrastructure.

"Hostway's uptime is better than what I can offer with my own servers and my own engineers dedicated to that environment," Montgomery said.

Cloud infrastructure offered Cloudkey [benefits](#) beyond the obvious scaling advantages. Cloudkey became able to create a dynamic business model that was capable of changing without significant infrastructure changes and expenses.



Cloudkey outgrew the constraints of its colocated servers and needed a solution that was accessible online and customizable at the customer level.



Hostways' public cloud infrastructure met Cloudkey's requirements and exceeded their expectations, allowing them to continue to grow and scale without downtime.



Cloudkey's requirements that were met by Hostway's Public Cloud:

- Microsoft SQL Server services
- SAS 70 Certified Data Centers
- Easily accessible Online Portal
- Highly available infrastructure

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"We make adjustments on a client-by-client basis," Montgomery said. "Now, we're less boxed into our decisions."

But one of the biggest selling points was turning over some responsibilities to a hosting provider. Cloudkey can focus on developing new features within its CRM tool to win more clients.

"We develop applications because we're good at that," Montgomery said. "We trust Hostway to ensure the infrastructure we need to grow is available and quickly accessible – that's their core competency."

RESULTS

With the help of Hostway's public cloud service, Cloudkey's client base has grown, with roughly 1,000 end-users now interacting with the CRM system every day. Cloudkey has added six servers in the last three months alone, and they are continuing to grow significantly on Hostway's cloud platform.

Cloudkey also benefits from the around-the-clock availability and expertise of Hostway support, offered at no additional expense.

"Hostway's entire support team is not only responsive, they're knowledgeable on every topic I've thrown their way," Montgomery said. "I don't even know if there's a second tier of support – whoever answers the phone has had every answer."

Not only did Cloudkey's security situation remain the same as in its prior colocation arrangement – the cost went down significantly. In addition to the increased physical security of a Hostway datacenter, Cloudkey benefits from three layers of power supply and failover protection.

"What we were paying just to rent floor space was almost double what we pay end-to-end with Hostway," Montgomery explained. "When you add in what we were paying for servers and the salaries of the three system engineers we had to manage those servers, the cost difference is extremely significant to our bottom line."

Hostway's control panel offers Cloudkey an abundance of do-it-yourself options – and when they need something customized, Cloudkey's account manager at Hostway works with support to have things ready within a day.

"We knew we were going to save money, and we have," Montgomery said. "But we didn't expect to find a team that made everything so easy every step of the way."

CONCLUSION

For Cloudkey, moving mission-critical applications to the cloud wasn't a risk. It was a simple decision, and they've never looked back.

"We're not a big company – our ability to supervise a managed environment is limited," Montgomery said. "We get more management out of Hostway's cloud than out of our own managed servers. If it is about the bottom line, we pay less for cloud. If it's about managing risk, Hostway's cloud has definitely reduced security and scalability risks."

Cloudkey's savings from switching to the cloud – in addition to the growth they've experienced thanks to their new CRM capabilities – have created an efficient, profitable business model, scalable whenever needed. And the customer base is only growing.

"We have 10 times as many users as when we were on managed infrastructure, and three times as many groups of clients. We've been able to instantly scale, without downtime, to support our growth," Montgomery said. "Hostway's service makes that possible."



Hostway FlexCloud Platform for CloudKey

FLEXCLOUD NETWORK OVERVIEW

