Transport4 Resolves Data Center Headaches by Moving to AWS with Cloudnexa

Billing themselves as the "Orbitz for the Oil Industry," Transport4 offers a cost-effective, reliable and secure software solution for carriers and their customers distributing petroleum products throughout the United States. Petroleum suppliers turn to Transport4 to move product across state lines, determine what pipeline movements will best suit their supply needs, schedule the shipping, monitor for confirmations, and receive custody tickets for accounting.

CHALLENGE: Ditching the Data Center

As the contract with their previous hosting provider was nearing its expiration date, Tim Hainey, Transport4's vice president of infrastructure, realized that the company needed to evaluate alternatives for managing the company's IT infrastructure. The cost effectiveness, scalability and reliability of public cloud infrastructure such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), compared with the cost and availability associated with their existing provider, made the cloud a very attractive alternative. At that time, Transport4 had a small base of servers in their data centers, and was concerned about maintaining availability in the event of an outage.

> *"We only had two servers sitting there [in the data center]; if we lost both of those, we were completely down," Hainey said. "Now in Amazon, even if we lost 100 servers, we'd still be up and running since we can move around in their environment."*

Hainey realized that what had started as a hassle became a threat to Transport4's business model that could ultimately impact their ability to deliver services to customers.

SOLUTION: Making the Switch to Cloudnexa and AWS

After researching multiple vendors, Hainey and his team quickly realized that Cloudnexa's Managed Services on AWS presented the best price/best service combination for their business. Cloudnexa was able to ensure that Transport4's transition to AWS was as simple and smooth as possible, and Transport4 's migration was successfully completed in November 2014.

During the initial planning and build phases, Transport4 relied on Cloudnexa's architectural services team, which designed and deployed their VPCs, customer VPNs, multi-region connectivity, server, storage, and email infrastructure. Once migration was complete, the managed services team provided testing, quality assurance, and transitioned to ongoing support for all associated environments' services. As with any project, some minor hiccups were encountered, but all hurdles were overcome and all issues were successfully resolved with Cloudnexa's assistance.

BENEFITS: Uptime Goes Up; Costs Go Down

Transport4 has primarily benefited from the tremendous cost savings in switching from their data center model to AWS, and Hainey believes the combination of AWS and Cloudnexa has made their infrastructure better. He particularly enjoys the fact he can run production sites in two separate states -- Virginia and Oregon.

> *"Our uptime has improved significantly due to being in the cloud. We can patch our entire site without having to go offline," Hainey said. "We used to have to go offline at least once a month; now not all."*

Transport4 has the same two people monitoring its environment as they did with the traditional data center, but that's where the similarities end. The company's previous hosting provider handled patching, but that caused problems due to updates exceeding maintenance windows and potential outages. By switching to a highly-available model, Transport4 now executes seamless patch management without any downtime and any impact to their customer base.

Hainey also enjoys the flexibility and responsiveness of the Cloudnexa support staff; if he has a database administration (DBA) question, he can shoot an email over to get an answer right away. He also noted how, on one occasion, they wanted to test a new CPU configuration in AWS. Cloudnexa assisted in setting up & running the simulation, as well as removing the associated artifacts once the test was completed. Hainey said it would have been impossible to replicate that test in their previous, traditional on-premise environment due to hardware and cost constraints.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR TRANSPORT4?

The company plans to continue taking advantage of AWS services that make sense for its growing business. And while Transport4's cloud expertise is growing over time, Hainey has no interest in himself or his staff becoming detailed experts in AWS. They are happy to partner with Cloudnexa to fulfill this function, allowing them to stay focused on improving the quality of their pipeline managed services.