Sereno Clouds

With the popularity of cloud computing soaring in Asia, cloud brokerage company Sereno Clouds wanted to get in on the action. Using SUSE® OpenStack Cloud and pre-installed multi-cloud management tool Appcara App360, Sereno Clouds created a reliable, cost-effective platform for deploying and managing private clouds, which now forms the basis of its popular IaaS offering. Backed by enterprise-class support from SUSE, Sereno Clouds is ready to take Asia's booming cloud market by storm.

Overview

Sereno Clouds is a pioneering cloud broker, cloud consultancy and cloud service provider that helps clients make the move from traditional on-premises IT to the cloud. With offices in Hong Kong and Singapore, and partners operating in Indonesia and Malaysia, Sereno Clouds serves clients all across the Asia-Pacific region. The company works with large enterprise clients from the retail, e-commerce and telecommunications sectors, among others.

In addition to acting as an intermediary between clients and major cloud service providers such as IBM and Microsoft, Sereno Clouds offers comprehensive consulting services to help make the transition to the cloud as smooth as possible. The company also offers its own Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) offerings, along with an array of other cloud-enabled services, including disaster recovery and backup services.

Challenge

Over the last 10 years, cloud computing has taken the IT world by storm. Today, cloud computing is commonplace in the United States, Europe and Australia, with many enterprises taking advantage of the flexibility, efficiency and agility that the cloud offers in one way or another. It is a different story in Asia, however, where uptake has typically not been as high.

Paul Hui, Director of Business Development at Sereno Clouds, begins: "In our experience, we have found buy-in to the cloud to be very slow across Asia Pacific. Many CIOs and IT Managers are highly concerned about data residency, security and control, so have great reservations about moving business systems to the public cloud. But the tide is starting to turn. The rise in popularity of private and hybrid cloud services in recent years shows that more and more enterprises are willing to make the move and see what cloud computing can do for their business."

For Sereno Clouds, the increase in interest in the cloud represented a golden opportunity to expand its service offering and win new clients.

> "Thanks to SUSE OpenStack Cloud, we can deliver the reliable, secure, flexible cloud services that clients want—at highly competitive prices. As the appetite for cloud services continues to grow in Asia, we are confident that with SUSE OpenStack Cloud, we can deliver on that demand."

PAUL HUI
Director of Business Development
Sereno Clouds

Sereno Clouds at a Glance:

Sereno Clouds is an enterprise-class cloud broker and cloud service provider that supports clients across Asia.

■ **Industry and Location**
   Computer Services, Hong Kong

■ **Product and Services**
   SUSE OpenStack Cloud
   Appcara App360
   SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
   SUSE Manager

■ **Results**
   + *Provides a cost-effective private cloud platform, enabling Sereno Clouds to pass on savings to clients*
   + *Accelerates time-to-market for private cloud services, helping Sereno Clouds capitalize on demand*
   + *Automates many routine provisioning tasks, freeing IT staff to focus on value-add activities*

"We firmly believe that cloud computing is the future and that it will dominate enterprise IT in the coming years," says Paul Hui. "Previously, our main focus had been cloud brokerage, which meant connecting clients with well-known cloud service providers and offering advice and guidance to ease the transition from on-premises infrastructure to the cloud. But with interest in and demand for cloud computing growing all the time, we also wanted to offer hosted cloud services of our own.

"To do this, we needed a flexible, reliable and cost-effective platform on which to create highly secure private cloud environments for businesses. Reducing operating costs is a key business goal for many companies, so we looked for a platform that would provide the required economies of scale for us to bring down IT costs for our clients."

Solution

After evaluating several solutions on the marketplace, Sereno Clouds decided to use OpenStack, a free, open-source cloud computing platform. OpenStack is a cloud operating system that makes it easier to provision and orchestrate large pools of compute, storage and networking resources, all managed through a single dashboard.

For two years, the company used OpenStack to run a multi-tenant cloud environment, providing clients with their own private clouds hosted in its Hong Kong data center.

"We are big fans of OpenStack technology," remarks Paul Hui. "By pooling resources across our physical infrastructure, OpenStack makes provisioning virtual servers very quick and easy. However, as the number of clients requesting private cloud services grew, and our OpenStack environment become more mature and increasingly complex as a result, we realized

that using an open-source tool to support commercial services would only become more challenging as time went by. We wanted the stability and peace of mind of a certified solution supported by a major global vendor."

Sereno Clouds selected SUSE OpenStack Cloud as the new foundation for its IaaS offering.

Paul Hui comments: "Since we use SUSE Linux Enterprise Server as the operating system for our server infrastructure, choosing SUSE OpenStack Cloud was a bit of a no-brainer. We wanted an enterprise solution from a vendor we could trust and, having worked with SUSE for many years, knew we could rely on them for support. We run all of our most critical business applications on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, which we have found to be exceptionally reliable. This gave us great confidence that the SUSE distribution of OpenStack was the right choice for us.

"We worked closely with SUSE on a Proof of Concept, which was very successful. After we had checked the solution design with the SUSE team, we were able to deploy SUSE OpenStack Cloud without external support and everything went very smoothly. Support from SUSE continues to be excellent and we appreciate the fact that we can speak to experienced local SUSE staff here in Hong Kong if we ever have any questions or encounter any technical issues."

SUSE OpenStack Cloud is a highly automated solution for building and managing private clouds, enabling Sereno Clouds to provide IaaS offerings with ease. When clients require a new environment, or to flex resources up or down in an existing private cloud, SUSE OpenStack Cloud enables rapid response and helps ensure that the agreed configuration is delivered.

Currently, Sereno Clouds has a single SUSE OpenStack Cloud cluster hosting multiple different private clouds for clients hosted in the same data center. The six physical servers in the cluster managed by SUSE OpenStack Cloud support more than 60 virtual servers on which clients run diverse workloads. Sereno Clouds uses SUSE Manager to manage both the physical and virtual servers, simplifying maintenance.

Paul Hui adds: "Another feature that attracted us to SUSE OpenStack Cloud was the fact it incorporates Appcara App360, which had been highly recommended to us by a partner organization."

Appcara App360 is a cloud management tool that integrates seamlessly with major public and private cloud technologies, such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, OpenStack, and virtualization software such as VMware. Appcara App360 can therefore act as a single portal for managing a multi-cloud infrastructure, making it an excellent tool for commercial cloud service providers.

Paul Hui comments: "As cloud computing continues to grow in popularity across Asia, so too will the number of cloud environments that the typical enterprise runs. In addition to private clouds, we expect clients to branch into hybrid and public cloud environments, too. Keeping track of a mature, multi-cloud environment can be tricky, which is why we offer Appcara App360 as a value-add service to clients.

"Appcara App360 enables you to manage all your clouds—whether public or private—and virtualized VMware environments through a single portal. So instead of having to log into different control systems and dashboards from multiple vendors, all with different interfaces, clients can manage everything with Appcara App360. It doesn't matter what the underlying cloud service is; the solution delivers a consistent user experience."

Paul Hui adds: "We have collaborated with Appcara to deliver App360 as a service to several clients. They also have an office in Hong Kong offering local support, which is important to us. Working together, we were able to customize the portal to meet our clients' specific requirements."

Results

With SUSE OpenStack Cloud and Appcara App360, Sereno Clouds can deliver robust, reliable, secure private cloud services to clients more easily than ever before. While with other solutions it can take several days to provision a private cloud, SUSE OpenStack Cloud makes providing flexible IaaS simple.

"We can now set up and deploy new private clouds for clients much faster than before," says Paul Hui. "Employees have reported that the SUSE OpenStack Cloud web-based graphical user interface is really easy to use, which makes spinning up private clouds a straightforward, painless process. This means that we can rapidly deliver on client demand for resources and, crucially, meet their expectations around the agility of cloud-based services."

The high level of automation that SUSE OpenStack Cloud offers means that Sereno Clouds can spend less time on deployment and maintenance, freeing up staff to focus on innovation.

Paul Hui elaborates: "Based purely on feedback from staff, we know that SUSE's build of OpenStack is better suited to our commercial operations than the vanilla version of the software. By automating many of the routine tasks involved in provisioning new environments, SUSE OpenStack Cloud frees up IT staff to focus on value-add activities. We now spend less time deploying private clouds for clients and much less time on maintenance.

"By accelerating provisioning and reducing maintenance requirements, SUSE OpenStack Cloud is a much more cost-efficient platform for our cloud services. This gives us the economy of scale we need to be able to deliver the services they want at a lower price than they could achieve with on-premises infrastructure. We know that reducing costs is a primary business driver for cloud adoption, so being able to offer cost-efficient services based on SUSE OpenStack Cloud will help us to attract new clients and grow our market share."

For many of Sereno Clouds' clients, the combination of the private cloud service based on SUSE OpenStack Cloud and the Appcara App360 add-on service has transformed their technological capabilities.

Paul Hui explains: "Most Asian enterprises still run their own in-house infrastructure, parts of which are typically virtualized. But because the cost of virtualization software licences is very high, CIOs and IT Managers are constantly looking for cheaper alternatives. Our IaaS offering based on SUSE OpenStack Cloud with Appcara App360 delivers the security and control they crave at a much lower price. Rather than investing potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars in hardware and software licences, they benefit from lower operational costs and can significantly reduce their total cost of ownership for IT."

In addition to providing fully managed cloud services using Appcara App360, Sereno Clouds also offers this tool as a service—giving clients the ability to manage their cloud environment themselves.

"Although we handle all of the major updates and software patches for them, most clients prefer to handle the day-to-day management of their cloud environment themselves," says Paul Hui. "With our Appcara App360-as-a-service offering, clients have all the tools they need to manage their complete cloud environment independently. That's to say, in addition to our private cloud service, clients can manage any other private, hybrid or public clouds they may have, as well as any virtualized infrastructure."

The Appcara App360 dashboard presents detailed information about workloads in real time, across any connected cloud environments. The dashboard was designed to make monitoring and managing cloud services and applications as intuitive as possible. The graphical user interface makes it quick and convenient to track usage, and even provides visualizations of running costs in real time.

Paul Hui notes: "Appcara App360 makes tracking IT budget utilization much easier, since you have a unified overview of your entire cloud environment and can pinpoint exactly how much you are spending and on what services. Furthermore, clients can generate reports using Appcara App360, so that business users can analyze budget usage and allocate it in smarter ways."

Today, with SUSE OpenStack Cloud and Appcara App360, Sereno Clouds can deliver superior private cloud services to its clients.

Paul Hui concludes: "Thanks to SUSE OpenStack Cloud, we can deliver the reliable, secure, flexible cloud services that clients want—at highly competitive prices. As the appetite for cloud services continues to grow in Asia, we are confident that with SUSE OpenStack Cloud, we can deliver on that demand."

"We run all of our most critical business applications on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, which we have found to be very exceptionally reliable. This gave us great confidence that the SUSE distribution of OpenStack was the right choice for us."

PAUL HUI
Director of Business Development
Sereno Clouds

www.suse.com

Contact your local SUSE Solutions Provider, or call SUSE at:

1 800 796 3700 U.S./Canada
1 801 861 4500 Worldwide

SUSE
1800 S. Novell Place
Provo, UT 84606

SUSE
Maxfeldstrasse 5
90409 Nuremberg
Germany

SUSE