FUJITSU

Case Study
First Citizens Bank

»We can focus on our jobs and let Fujitsu take care of the infrastructure. That means we can concentrate on innovation, bringing new services to the market and refining our internal processes«
Dennis Khan, Systems Architecture Manager, First Citizens Bank

The customer

First Citizens Bank
Location: Caribbean
Industry: Financial Services
Founded: 1993
Number of employees: 1,800
Website: www.firstcitizenstt.com

First Citizens

The challenge

Faced with an unreliable data center whose lease had nearly expired, First Citizens Bank wanted to find a new platform to support its business critical banking applications.

The solution

IT migrated 20 applications to the Fujitsu Cloud platform, hosted in its Tier 3 data center in Barataria. This delivers optimal uptime, secure performance and allows First Citizens to quickly provision new services.

The customer

The First Citizens Group is one of the leading financial services groups in Trinidad & Tobago, offering a full range of retail, corporate and merchant banking services as well as asset management, trustee and brokerage services. In 2009, First Citizens acquired Caribbean Money Market Brokers Limited (now rebranded as First Citizens Investment Services Limited), the largest full service securities trading company in the Caribbean, with offices in Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia. In January 2012 the Group ventured into the Central American market and opened a representative office in Costa Rica, which is expected to propel the First Citizens brand abroad.

The challenge

First Citizens Investment Services was using legacy servers and storage at a data center facility to support its applications, including Temenos T24, a complete front to back-office, CRM and product lifecycle management software platform that powers core banking operations. However, the existing data center presented challenges due to an unreliable power supply and insufficient Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) capability. This led to regular downtime which the company could not afford. In addition, the lease on the data center was coming to an end, leading the bank to explore different options.

The bank analyzed the costs of setting up and equipping a new data center and compared it to the Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) model. It quickly became clear that it would be much more cost-effective to go with a managed services approach.

"If we invest in our own hardware, we need to refresh it every three years and put considerable resources into managing the platform," explains Dennis Khan, Systems Architecture Manager, First Citizens Bank. "However, using a cloud solution has the advantage of giving us a Tier 3 certified infrastructure with power cooling and multiple backup options and the ability to rapidly provision new applications. We don't need to worry about the hardware and can focus on adding strategic value to the business."

First Citizens had previously worked with Fujitsu on a networking and firewall solution and was aware of its reputation as a world class enterprise computing leader. As the only Tier 3 data center provider in the region, it was the natural partner for this project.

The benefit

- The IT team at First Citizens has freed up 20 percent more time as a result of handing hardware management to Fujitsu, enabling it to focus on innovation and delivering new services
- The bank expects IT costs to be reduced by 12 percent over six years
- New services can be provisioned in hours rather than weeks, accelerating time to market and making the bank more responsive to changing market demands
- Predictive fault detection identifies any issues early so they can be resolved before disrupting operations

Products and services

- Fujitsu Infrastructure as a Service

The solution

Over the course of three months, First Citizens worked with Fujitsu to migrate 20 applications to its data center in Barataria. By undertaking the testing during the week and then copying virtual images on weekends, they were together able to minimize the disruption to the business. Working in the financial sector, security was a key concern.

"The migration process was smooth and went according to plan. It has given us a world class operating environment that adheres to the most stringent security protocols," adds Khan. "We have chosen to host our services in a VMware® virtual environment which allows us to provision new services near instantaneously, whereas previously it might have taken us six weeks."

Fujitsu also provides a monitoring service that ensures any issues are detecting long before they affect operations. This ensures optimal uptime and peak performance.

"Fujitsu understands the importance of delivering maximum uptime and proactively employs predictive fault detection to guarantee the best service," says Khan. "This gives me peace of mind and allows me to focus my attention on more strategic tasks."

The benefit

Now, First Citizens can securely access its business critical applications 24/7 via a fiber connection. Because they are hosted within the Fujitsu data center, availability and reliability have improved and Khan and his team no longer have to spend hours firefighting hardware issues. And the faster time to market which comes with rapid application provisioning is giving the bank the opportunity to innovate further.

"We don't need to worry about power outages or have to chase after failing hardware – we can focus on our jobs and let Fujitsu take care of the infrastructure. That means we can concentrate on innovation, bringing new services to the market and refining our internal processes," continues Khan. "I'd estimate that under the new system my team has 20 percent more free time available to invest in these value added tasks."

The cloud approach is also saving the company money. First Citizens expects to reduce its IT spend by 12 percent over a six year period. Such has been the success of this project that the bank is looking at other parts of the business that it could migrate to either the IaaS model or a co-location agreement in the data center.

"There are many business units within the bank that could benefit from this approach so we are evaluating where to go next," comments Khan. "There is no doubt that this reliable, flexible and high performing IT model can transform the way we work."

Conclusion

This project marks the first local cloud implementation for financial services in the Caribbean and stands out as a trendsetter in the region. It demonstrates that using the IaaS approach can deliver cost-savings without compromising on performance.

"Fujitsu has given us a cost-effective, secure and robust application platform that can provision new services rapidly. That means my team don't need to worry about the hardware and can focus on innovation."

Dennis Khan, Systems Architecture Manager, First Citizens Bank