



Al Naboodah builds Nutanix-based enterprise private cloud

Adopting hyperconverged infrastructure has resulted in a significant reduction of our IT management complexity and energy consumption. The Al Naboodah group runs its shared IT services on a Nutanix-based enterprise private cloud. This new environment gives us the flexibility to adapt quickly to our growing IT needs.

Al Naboodah Group Enterprises is one of the leading brand names in the United Arab Emirates. Founded in 1958 by brothers Saeed and Mohammed Al Naboodah as a trading company for agricultural machines, the group has since developed a diverse portfolio of 15 different businesses in the fields of construction, MEP, automotive, transportation, electrical products, logistics, travel and renewable energy.

The Group IT Department offers a range of shared IT services, all of which are fully managed in-house. It is our department's role to support the business in reaching its goals, by ensuring that all IT requirements are delivered on time and at the right quality level.

I joined Al Naboodah about four years ago with the clear mission to modernise the IT environment. Decades of fast, organic growth had led to a scattered and very heterogeneous IT landscape, in terms of both hardware and software. The group's companies ran different brands and types of standalone servers, standalone storage and network infrastructure. There was no dedicated group datacentre, only separate server rooms, each tailored to the specific needs of the group's different companies. This fragmented environment proved to be really complex to manage, while at the same time making it very hard to keep up with the various companies' evolving IT needs.

ENTERPRISE PRIVATE CLOUD

When Al Naboodah decided to move to new headquarters, I convinced the board that this was the perfect opportunity to build a central datacentre. Before we made our final decision, we conducted a market study. We looked at the pros and cons of hosting, public cloud, private cloud and all sorts of hybrid solutions. In the end, Al Naboodah decided to go with the solution that offered the highest level of maturity and to build our very own enterprise private cloud. We studied the market even more closely, comparing traditional hardware with converged and hyperconverged infrastructure. We really delved deeply into all of the options out there. Our evaluation of nine tenders from a range of vendors eventually led to the selection of Nutanix.



Our Nutanix-based enterprise private cloud offers the flexibility, availability, and productivity we need, while we keep control of our data and security.

Mario Foster
Group CIO at Al Naboodah Group Enterprises

I have to admit that, at first, the employees of the Group IT Department had some reservations. Nutanix was all new to them; but it was precisely this strong, innovative offering that convinced us. We had in-depth interviews with Nutanix's technical teams and were invited to visit several of their reference customers. The Nutanix team's patience and commitment to introducing us to the benefits resulted in our team gaining sufficient insight to be convinced that hyperconverged infrastructure was the way to go.



We deployed Nutanix in our brand-new datacentre, located at the group's new headquarters in Dubai. Nutanix is the core of the company's enterprise private cloud. All mission-critical applications run on the hyper-converged infrastructure, including Microsoft Exchange, CRM, SQL, SharePoint, Citrix XenApp, Veeam, the .NET development environment and more. We found that we had to move our ERP system to new hardware because the datacentre wasn't ready yet, but we plan to move this to Nutanix as well in about two years' time.

LESS ADMIN, LESS ENERGY

The main advantage of the Nutanix migration is an enormous gain in management efficiency and productivity. We manage the entire IT platform in one place: hosts, virtual machines, storage, and connectivity. Centralised monitoring and reports – presented on a centralised console – support the teams. We now have much more flexibility. The provisioning of new requirements, for example, can be arranged really quickly. An OS upgrade on a host takes just one click. In the past, we had to upgrade 200 VMs on 50 hosts manually, one at a time. Can you imagine what a complex, risky and time-consuming effort that was?

Overall, we have reduced our admin efforts by around 40%. This has given our Group IT Department's employees more time and freedom to focus on other needs of the business, as well as on creativity and innovation, and on the continuous improvement of the overall IT environment. At the same time, Nutanix has made an enormous contribution to the group's sustainability objectives. Since we have been running Nutanix, our need for power and cooling has dropped spectacularly, resulting in 50% energy savings.



SECURE AND EFFICIENT

Today, Nutanix is an integral part of Al Naboodah's strategic IT vision. It's really easy to access the public cloud, but getting out again can prove to be extremely difficult. For this reason, we only run a small set-up in the public cloud. For everything else, we rely on our own enterprise private cloud, based on Nutanix. It offers the same service, speed, and efficiency as the public cloud, while we keep control of our data and security. That's what makes the difference.



Who is

MARIO FOSTER

Mario Foster is Group CIO at Al Naboodah Group Enterprises, a leading brand name in the United Arab Emirates. Employing over 16,000 people of almost 50 different nationalities, the group boasts a diverse portfolio of 15 different businesses in the fields of construction, MEP, automotive, transportation, electrical products, logistics, travel and renewable energy.