

Shift To The Cloud takes on the cloud giants with OnApp

Shift To The Cloud is a division of Stone Internet Services, a leading Belgian hosting provider. Using OnApp Cloud software, Shift To The Cloud has created an affordable alternative to global cloud providers like Amazon for customers in Belgium and beyond.

Stone Internet Services has provided a range of shared, dedicated, colocation and supporting hosting services since 2003. By 2011, however, it was clear that cloud hosting would play an important role in its future growth. The company's founder, Stein Van Stichel, explains:

"There was a definite gap in the Belgian market for an enterprise cloud product at an affordable price. So that was our starting point: we wanted to create a service like Amazon's, but built around the needs of our local market. What we've actually created is gaining traction much further afield," he says.

What cloud customers need

The issues driving customers toward cloud services will be familiar to any hosting provider. Many of Shift To The Cloud's customers are companies with unpredictable business patterns, such as web and marketing agencies, software developers, and even festival organizers.

"These companies run projects that only last for a few months at a time," Stein Van Stichel says. "They don't necessarily need 24x7 capacity - they just want a flexible service that adjusts to their business. And they want to use a local provider, but it had always been expensive to get quality cloud services in this market. With OnApp, we give them that flexibility, at a sensible price, without compromising on quality."

Choosing a cloud platform

The Shift To The Cloud team compared several cloud platforms, and chose OnApp for its combination of ease of use and high-end feature set. Now the company offers a range of configurable cloud servers, and a full virtual cloud data center service, powered by OnApp.

The new OnApp cloud went into production in December 2011, hosted in an IBM- rated tier III++ datacenter in Diegem. Four months later, Shift To The Cloud was already generating half of the company's growth.

"OnApp lets us offer enterprise cloud services at a midmarket price," says Marijn Willems, Sales Manager at Shift To The Cloud. "Our customers love features like autoscaling for virtual machines, and the fact that we can use OnApp templates to provide pre-configured OS installs - it takes away the burden of installing and doing it all by themselves."

"It was also the most user-friendly product we evaluated," adds Stein Van Stichel. "OnApp makes it easy for users to manage their



Website: www.shifftothecloud.com

OnApp go-live: December 2011

Summary:

- > OnApp Cloud generates 50% of business growth in just four months
- > Enables Shift To The Cloud to offer enterprise cloud features at low cost
- > Easy to use for customers and admins
- > Integrated CDN brings Shift To The Cloud's customers closer to their customers



"With OnApp we're growing fast, and gaining market share, and that's the real proof of its success"

Stein Van Stichel,
Founder, Shift To The Cloud

Case study **Shift To The Cloud**

cloud services while enabling us to provide almost everything a business needs for cloud hosting. And the platform is still growing - we get new features with every update."

Deployment & support

While the OnApp cloud platform can be deployed in just a couple of days, the Shift To The Cloud team took time to understand the business as well as the technology implications of moving from dedicated servers to cloud infrastructure.

"The cloud hosting business model is a little different to traditional web hosting, and we wanted to understand how it would change our existing provisioning, pricing and support processes," says Stein Van Stichel. "With the OnApp team we worked through all kinds of scenarios to make sure we launched a product that was proven, and that worked for our market."

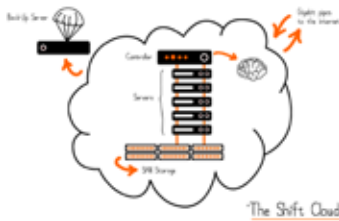
OnApp's 24x7 support was an added bonus for the company, adds Marijn Willems. "We are very happy with the level of customer service we get from OnApp. A lot of software providers talk up their support service, but OnApp actually delivers. The level of support is much higher than any other company we work with."

Going global with OnApp CDN

While the Belgian market provides the core of Shift To The Cloud's business, its cloud services are seeing take-up further afield, in The Netherlands and other neighbouring European countries, as well as from customers in India and Russia.

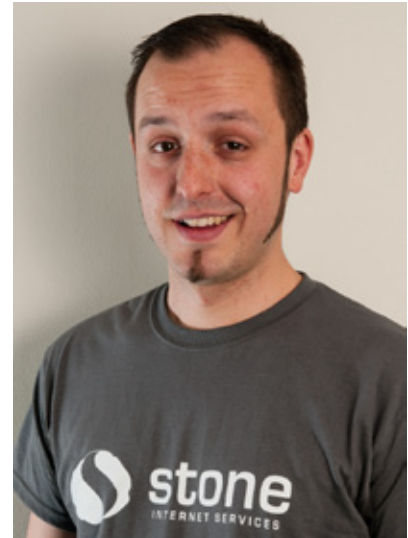
"We are a local player, but OnApp gives our customers the same features they would expect from a global provider like Amazon. That's one reason we're seeing growth from customers outside our home territory," says Stein Van Stichel.

The company expects to see more international growth in the future as it rolls out new CDN services to its customers, based on the OnApp CDN platform.



"Adding CDN services is going to be another important part of that growth," he continues. "Through OnApp's global CDN network we can give our customers access to a huge range of locations at very low cost. It's practically impossible

to make an Amazon clone or make a CDN network by yourself, but OnApp has given us the tools to really offer an alternative."



"OnApp lets us offer enterprise cloud services at a midmarket price"

Marijn Willems,
Sales Manager, Shift To The Cloud

The way things should be done

According to Marijn Willems, OnApp has helped Shift To The Cloud identify and secure a new niche in its market - and the cloud represents the future for traditional services like shared hosting. "Cloud is just the way things should be done. Shared hosting that is based on a physical node, that's just going to disappear. Our OnApp cloud platform brings benefits to our customers, with a new level of reliability and scalability, and of course it is more efficient and cost-effective for us as a provider, too."

"We were the first Belgian provider to offer a fully automated cloud hosting service," adds Stein Van Stichel. "With OnApp we're growing fast, and gaining market share, and that's the real proof of its success."

Learn more about Shift To The Cloud at <http://shiftothecloud.com>.

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