SpeedySparrow takes to the cloud with OnApp

SpeedySparrow is a successful hosting provider with a unique brand identity. The company was founded in 2006 and adopted the SpeedySparrow brand early in 2010.

Today, SpeedySparrow provides high quality hosting to consumers, small businesses, resellers and larger enterprise customers. Its particular specialty is shared, VPS and reseller hosting in the cloud, powered by OnApp.

"We used OnApp to create a true shared hosting environment in the cloud, and we've seen real growth since our OnApp cloud went live," says Eric Cooper, SpeedySparrow's Chief Operations Officer. "We provide more traditional services too, of course: if a customer wants a dedicated server, that's fine by us – we don't force you down the cloud route. For more and more of our customers, though, cloud hosting is the way to go."

Growing demand for cloud hosting

Like many hosting users, SpeedySparrow customers would often "start small" with a shared hosting package and gradually work up to more substantial hosting arrangements. While this had helped SpeedySparrow grow, it soon began to reach the limits of what could be achieved with traditional shared, dedicated and VPS products, as Eric Cooper explains.

"We reached a point where, in a way, we had nowhere else to go. Demand for traditional VPS was so high we were struggling to keep up. It sounds like a nice problem to have, but the reality of a hosting business is that if you can't immediately meet customer demand, you tend to lose customers."

"We needed a more scalable, more automated hosting platform for these customers, and so we started looking for a cloud-based system," he says.

First steps to the cloud

Before moving to OnApp, SpeedySparrow attempted to build its cloud hosting business with virtualization technology from another vendor. This was not entirely successful.

"We couldn't integrate it successfully with our shared environment, and we had significant stability issues," says Eric Cooper. "Unlike OnApp, it was an incredibly complex system to work with. We had a hard time even understanding the licensing without speaking to their billing team. Overall it was difficult and time- consuming to manage, our servers were running at maximum all the time, and on top of that the system kept failing."

These issues were beginning to cause serious problems for SpeedySparrow and its customers. The company had to take action before the situation became unsalvageable.

Making the move to OnApp

"There were two options," says Eric Cooper. "We could drop our flaky virtualization platform and switch back to a dedicated hosting model

Website: www.speedysparrow.com

OnApp go-live: May 2011

Summary:

> One platform handles multiple cloud hosting services

> Intuitive management enables entire cloud to be managed in-house

> Integrates with WHMCS billing engine

> More stable and easier to manage than competing products

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while we looked for a better system – or we could simply give up, and lose all of our customers."

"Calling it quits was never really an option," he continues. "We're a hosting company: serving customers is what we do. So we were extremely happy – not to mention relieved – when we discovered OnApp. OnApp gave us the flexibility to host all servers in the cloud – shared, VPS, everything – without one service impacting all of the others."

The whole process, from signing up with OnApp to completing implementation, took about a month.

Efficient cloud management

SpeedySparrow's OnApp-powered cloud is located at state-of-the-art datacenters in New Jersey. Its cloud has advanced SAS and SSD storage, and integrates with SpeedySparrow's WHMCS billing platform.

"Once we'd investigated OnApp we really didn't need to evaluate any other products," says Eric Cooper. "We could manage OnApp with our own staff, inside our budget, and interface it directly with the rest of the business. It's far more stable for our shared and VPS cloud set-up, and a more powerful system as far as back-end administration is concerned."

Building new services in the cloud

After a few months running its cloud in production, SpeedySparrow confirms that performance is as least as good as expected.

"Originally we thought the OnApp Controller could be a bottleneck, but it turns out that it actually works, unlike other controllers from other vendors," says Eric.

Now the company is beginning to expand its cloud platform with add-ons, and has just introduced new Litespeed services for customers.

"OnApp's cloud platform will grow with us as our company grows," he adds. "As we identify new opportunities in the market, even if our customers want something out of the ordinary, we're confident we can make it happen in our OnApp cloud."

Learn more about SpeedySparrow at
http://wwwspeedysparrow.com.

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