



Business challenge

To drive global growth and ensure continued regulatory compliance, IBM Marketing Cloud aimed to locate its services closer to its fast-expanding customer base.

Transformation

To drive global growth, IBM Marketing Cloud needed to meet changing regulations around data privacy, protection and transfer by locating its services in-country. By migrating customer data to IBM® Spectrum Accelerate™ on SoftLayer®, IBM Marketing Cloud is meeting its strategy to grow globally faster, be compliant and save costs.

Business benefits

Easy

expansion into distributed global environment

Delivers

high availability and performance in the public cloud

60%

cut in operational spend

IBM Marketing Cloud

Driving global growth with compliant, cost-effective software-defined storage in the cloud

IBM Marketing Cloud—previously Silverpop, an IBM Company—is a provider of marketing-as-a-service solutions delivered via an advanced public cloud platform. Its service offering includes email marketing, lead management, mobile engagement and cutting-edge data analytics to help large enterprises deliver more effective campaigns. The platform enables businesses to better understand individual customer preferences and behaviors, and use those insights to shape high-quality retail experiences throughout the buyer journey.

“IBM Spectrum Accelerate on SoftLayer is solving the challenge we had: delivering enterprise storage in the public cloud with high availability.”

—Paul Rafferty, Director of Infrastructure Architecture, IBM Marketing Cloud

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Meeting new regulatory demands with a distributed cloud

New and stricter in-country data protection laws are changing reality for companies and service providers. For software-as-a-service providers like IBM Marketing Cloud, formerly Silverpop, driving growth means addressing evolving regulatory demands—while continuing to deliver innovative, high-quality services to customers.

Paul Rafferty, Director of Infrastructure Architecture at IBM Marketing Cloud, explains: “We are a services provider of a smart, cloud-based solution. Our customers are international, and must comply with many new laws and regulations

around data privacy, protection and transfer. To continue our rapid expansion—our primary data is growing by 10 TB per month—we had to meet those emerging requirements, and we needed to deliver our services from all the countries our clients are located in.”

He continues: “In the past, we managed our on-premises compute, storage and networking resources in-house—but this approach prevented us from scaling out quickly and cost-effectively. We determined that migrating our mission-critical data into the public cloud would be the optimal route to growth, and looked for a partner to help realize our vision.”

Selecting the right storage for the job

After evaluating solutions from multiple vendors, IBM Marketing Cloud chose IBM Spectrum Accelerate software-defined storage and SoftLayer cloud infrastructure.

“IBM Spectrum Accelerate provides software-defined storage environments that we can use on the cloud, spin up fast, and we know will be reliable,” explains Rafferty. “Cloud is naturally unreliable—and the Spectrum Accelerate architecture addresses that. Of all the solutions we evaluated, we felt Spectrum Accelerate gave us the right blend of speed to provision, performance, operational simplicity, and integration with the whole ecosystem we are running on SoftLayer.”

IBM Marketing Cloud found IBM Spectrum Accelerate a perfect fit for its write-heavy workloads, which peak at around 20,000 random 8 kilobyte overwrites per second per database server. The solution’s solid-state drive (SSD) and memory for high-cache hit rates enable IBM Marketing Cloud to support bursty workloads while maintaining a read latency of under 2 milliseconds.

To ensure data protection and high availability for its clients, IBM Marketing Cloud maintains three online copies—primary production, secondary production and disaster recovery—of all data, on disparate arrays, with all copies able to support production workloads. For this, it requires 75,000 IOPS and 1 Gb/s throughput per system.

The marketing services provider built its own solution on SoftLayer, leasing bare metal Supermicro servers and other hardware, and deploying IBM Spectrum Accelerate on the VMware ESXi hypervisor. In just two months, IBM Marketing Cloud was in full production, in four months had scaled to half a petabyte usable, and after one year had deployed 14 clusters at seven SoftLayer pods (data centers) across the globe. Today, the organization is running three separate IBM Commerce business units—the marketing service, a merchandising service and an IBM Watson-based virtual analytics service—on a single, global Spectrum Accelerate infrastructure.

Rafferty notes: “Our Spectrum Accelerate experience has been fantastic. We’ve been able to eliminate some of our proprietary data centers, and retire considerable physical hardware—and still meet our tier 1 and other workload needs. In fact, our Spectrum Accelerate clusters are outperforming our original on-premises arrays.

“The performance we’re seeing out of IBM Spectrum Accelerate is pretty amazing—especially in a public cloud where the design is not intended to support high IOPS databases and you can have noisy neighbors. We’ve been very successful in migrating our customers onto IBM Spectrum Accelerate.”

Workloads running on the platform include very large Oracle databases—primary and Data Guard copies—ranging from 20 to 350 terabytes usable, as well as VMware, IBM DB2® on Linux, and Windows SQL Server and clustered application servers. The solution is also hyperconverged.

Rafferty notes: “Cloud deployments tend to ‘balloon’ footprints: our primary data is growing at 10 TB/month. We are able to deal with cloud capacity issues dynamically, by managing each cluster as one big storage pool and by leveraging the Spectrum Accelerate live volume migration capability to move data between SoftLayer pods. And we now do asynchronous replication between Spectrum Accelerate arrays by default.

“As an IBM entity one may think our choice of IBM Spectrum Accelerate a given, yet it’s purely results driven. IBM Spectrum Accelerate is our future—we are achieving our cloud platform transformation because of it.”

Expanding globally and saving substantially

With IBM Spectrum Accelerate on SoftLayer as its growth-enabling platform, IBM Marketing Cloud is growing and expanding into new countries at a gallop.

Rafferty explains: “We can spin up Spectrum Accelerate clusters very quickly—going from nothing to 250 terabytes of essentially enterprise storage online in 24 to 48 hours—including SoftLayer tasks. That’s just not something you can do on-premises with traditional hardware.”

The new platform is reducing the complexity and cost of delivering the organization’s software-as-a-service solution.

Rafferty comments: “Spectrum Accelerate is allowing us to fully migrate our production workload from an enterprise data center to the public cloud. The code base and manageability have been excellent. We’ve improved performance for our main application 15 to 20 percent. And we have just two FTEs—who do more than storage—managing almost two petabytes of data.

“The IBM Spectrum Accelerate solution has allowed us to cut our storage capital expenses by 50 percent per

year and reduce our annual operating expenses by 60 percent. The result is that we need fewer devices and less capital investment to serve transactions to our customers.”

He concludes: “All my customers are happy. I’m getting no complaints, which is what I like to hear. IBM Spectrum Accelerate on SoftLayer is solving the challenge we had, which was delivering enterprise storage in the public cloud with high availability.”

Solution components

- IBM® Spectrum Accelerate™
- SoftLayer® cloud

Connect with us



Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Spectrum Accelerate, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/systems/storage/spectrum

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