



Business challenge

Many businesses want a low-risk path to cloud for even their most demanding workloads, so LightEdge began building an offering to keep their most precious asset — data — safe, without breaking the bank.

Transformation

Businesses of all kinds are adopting cloud computing. A seasoned player in the cloud services market, LightEdge capitalized on its experience in the x86 world by launching a new offering based on enterprise-class IBM infrastructure. With help from Ciber, LightEdge has gone national with robust, low-cost, high-performance Power Cloud services.



Tom Prosia
Senior Vice President
Marketing and
Business
Development

Business benefits

99.999%

availability and encryption meets even the most challenging client needs

2x

storage performance of spinning disks at same price point offers a key selling point

Delivers

highly secure, available services that help clients comply with industry regulations

LightEdge

Illuminating a path to simplicity, efficiency and performance with cloud solutions powered by IBM

LightEdge Solutions, Inc. (LightEdge) is an enterprise-grade cloud service provider, colocation and consulting company headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa. Its services are underpinned by industry-leading security, comprehensive customer care and a network operations center that is monitored 24x7. Founded in 1996, the company today has state-of-the-art data centers in Des Moines, IA, and Kansas City, MO; plus very soon: Omaha, NE.

“Working with IBM and Ciber, we’ve tapped into new markets across the country, adding 75 percent to our customer base.”

— Tom Prosia, Senior Vice President Marketing and Business Development, LightEdge



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Kindling a spark of an idea

There's no substitute for experience, and with the cloud computing trend showing no sign of slowing down, early entrants to this marketplace continue to enjoy a first-mover advantage. One such provider—LightEdge—knew that it needed to build on the skills and expertise it had garnered over the years to preserve its lead over emerging competitors.

Roger Mellman, Director of Enterprise Solutions at LightEdge, elaborates: “Many systems integrators are waking up to the huge opportunities in cloud computing. But you can't just become a cloud services provider overnight—we at LightEdge have 21 years' experience to our name. We know how to secure customer environments, have a range of compliance credentials and a proven track record. For us, the challenge was identifying where we should take our services portfolio next.”

Seeing that the x86 market was having great success in the cloud, LightEdge decided to develop an offering for users of the IBM® Power Systems™ platform, identifying a demand for a low-risk, low-disruption path to the cloud.



Tom Prosia, Senior Vice President Marketing and Business Development at LightEdge, explains: “It's a familiar story: lots of companies' IT experts are retiring soon and there is a growing shortage of skills in the marketplace. Moving to the cloud is the ideal solution—but because the IBM Power environment usually supports their most critical business systems, enterprises need to trust their cloud provider 100 percent before taking the plunge.

“We needed the right strategic partner to ensure that we could make our new offering a success. It had to be failsafe in terms of performance and reliability, but we also needed to work out a cost model that meant we could offer competitive pricing.”

Catching fire

LightEdge found an ideal match when it teamed up with IBM Platinum Business Partner Ciber Global LLC (Ciber) to deliver its new Power Cloud offering.

“In Ciber we found a partner, not a vendor, to come with us on this journey,” recalls Mellman. “We could see parallels between the ways that they engage with their clients and our approach. Also, with some of their clients considering a move to the cloud, it was a win-win situation. Working with Ciber enables us to reach new customers, while they get to recommend a partner they trust and help us procure the necessary infrastructure to support them.”

“IBM FlashSystem enables us to offer twice the performance of spinning disk storage at the same price point. Backed up by IBM solutions, we can make sure that our clients' data is always accessible but also secure.”

—Roger Mellman, Director of Enterprise Solutions, LightEdge



Roger Mellman
Director of Enterprise Solutions

To provide the all-important storage underpinning its new IBM Power Systems infrastructure, LightEdge chose to deploy IBM FlashSystem® V9000. The company was attracted by the high performance and security of this all-flash storage platform.

“LightEdge started out serving the healthcare and finance markets, and 50 percent of the workloads we currently host are still for those industries,” comments Mellman. “Consequently, low latency and ease of compliance are very important to us—and IBM FlashSystem V9000 delivers on both counts.

“FlashSystem encrypts data at rest, meaning we can offer this service to our customers at no extra cost, which is a huge selling point. In the future, we plan to use the built-in IBM Spectrum Virtualize software to virtualize and manage non-IBM storage too. As a service provider, we see it as a huge advantage that we’re not locked into technology from a single vendor.”



Dan Kurtz, Vice President Business Development, LightEdge

LightEdge offers full hosting services for IBM Power Systems environments as well as hybrid cloud options. Dan Kurtz, Vice President Business Development at LightEdge, adds: “We offer disaster recovery alongside full hosting services within our Power Cloud. For companies that want to dip their toe in the waters before fully committing to the cloud, moving backup workloads to us can be a great starting point. In large part due to the IBM technology, we’re able to provide a quality of service that often persuades them to put their production systems in our hands too.”

“IBM is investing in the success of cloud services providers like LightEdge, clearing the path to more flexible cost models so that we can focus on delivering exceptional services to our clients.”

—Tom Prosia, Senior Vice President Marketing and Business Development, LightEdge

With assistance from Ciber, the company agreed on consumption-based pricing, enabling companies to acquire only what they need today, but with the flexibility to scale on demand.

“In the past, companies had to forecast growth for years to come, but that model is breaking down,” remarks Mellman. “With consumption-based pricing, we can grow organically alongside our customer base, which is a key benefit. Combining that with the appealing licensing model that Ciber helped us negotiate, we can offer enterprise-grade services to customers at prices that are competitive with commodity services from other providers.”

Gearing up for a bright future

LightEdge has seen a great response to its Power Cloud launch, with the company's client base growing fast.

"Working with IBM and Ciber, we've tapped into new markets, adding 75 percent to our customer base this year," says Prosia. "We're targeting another 75 percent next year too, so we're expecting long-term gains. Our Power Cloud offering is helping LightEdge establish a national presence, as we act on exploding demand across the country."

The stability and performance of the IBM solutions are helping LightEdge exceed client service level agreements, so that it can provide the continuity of service that drives client businesses.

"Every time we deploy a new cloud offering, it must meet five nines availability, which is no problem for the

ultra-reliable Power Systems and FlashSystem platforms," explains Mellman. "Specifically, FlashSystem enables us to offer twice the performance of spinning disk storage at the same price point, plus encryption at no additional charge. Backed up by IBM solutions, we can make sure that our clients' data is always accessible but also secure."

Many of LightEdge's clients realize significant cost savings when they move to the cloud, without any loss of performance or availability.

Prosia comments: "IBM is investing in the success of cloud services providers like LightEdge, clearing the path to more flexible cost models so that we can focus on delivering exceptional services to our clients. Collaborating with IBM and Ciber, we're building a bright future for Power Cloud at LightEdge, to ensure that companies can enjoy the outstanding benefits of IBM enterprise server and storage platforms for years to come."

ConAgra Brands, a USD 8 billion packaged foods company, relies on Power Cloud services for production and disaster recovery environments. John Murphy, Manager of Information Systems and Services at the company, comments: "LightEdge has provided us with a group of experts that share their skillsets, knowledge and best practices with our team, helping to improve effectiveness across our processes."

Mellman adds: "Looking to the future, we plan to replace the storage supporting our disaster recovery services with IBM Cloud Object Storage. By enabling us to provide greater functionality at lower cost, we will be able to expand our target market for that offering too, presenting another growth opportunity for LightEdge."

Solution components

- IBM® FlashSystem® V9000
- IBM Power Systems™ S822
- IBM Power Systems S824
- IBM Spectrum Virtualize™

Connect with us



Take the next step

To learn more about IBM FlashSystem solutions, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:

ibm.com/marketplace/flash-storage-virtualization

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