



Business challenge

To expand its data center offerings to include cloud services, Blue NAP Americas needed a more secure, scalable and flexible cloud platform.

Transformation

Blue NAP Americas needed a new cloud platform that could deliver cloud services to customers from its Tier IV data center. The company turned to IBM to help design, configure and deliver a solution based on VersaStack, a converged infrastructure solution jointly developed by IBM and Cisco. As a result, cloud services have become the top seller in the company's portfolio.

Results

Reduces time from days to minutes

to deploy a virtual machine

Requires 0% customer downtime

during hardware upgrades to the cloud platform

Generates up to 40% of company business

with the new cloud converged infrastructure

Blue NAP Americas

New cloud infrastructure becomes top revenue driver for Tier IV data center

Founded in 2016, [Blue NAP Americas](#) is a multi-tenant, carrier-neutral, Tier-IV certified data center based in Willemstad, Curaçao. In addition to serving as a network access point (NAP) for the Pan-Caribbean region, it offers a portfolio of data center solutions, including colocation, private cloud, and business continuity and managed services. The company serves both international and regional markets.

“Since launch, our cloud services offering based on IBM’s solution has far exceeded expectations.”

—Zabala, Danilo, CEO, Blue NAP Americas

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A move into cloud services

The Dutch Caribbean island of Curaçao is known for its crystal-clear waters, expansive beaches and colorful European architecture. It may seem an unlikely spot for Blue NAP Americas to house a multi-tenant Tier IV data center. But the island's location—90 miles north of Venezuela and 100 miles outside of the hurricane belt—makes it ideally situated as a network access point (NAP) and data solutions hub for the Pan-Caribbean region.

Only a handful of data centers have been granted Tier IV certification. The designation from the Uptime Institute—an organization that sets the tier standards for data centers globally—is reserved for data centers with the highest levels of redundancy and no single point of failure. Blue NAP Americas fully commits to the designation, promising its data center customers up to 100 percent uptime for power and cooling.

The three-year-old company may be relatively young, but since its inception it has set big goals. In fact, it first targeted large international corporations as its primary market, with some success.

However, as the advantages of its strategic location became clear, Blue NAP Americas shifted its focus to businesses closer to home. In the

process, the company examined how its products and services could best serve local customers. “We quickly realized that to cater to the small and medium businesses in the regional market, we’d need to invest in a cloud offering,” says Danilo Zabala, CEO of Blue NAP Americas.

At the time, the company’s legacy cloud platform was incapable of providing the modern, robust capabilities necessary to offer customers cloud services at a competitive price. The company sought to build a private cloud infrastructure that could safely and securely deploy the infrastructure as a service (IaaS) offerings its customers wanted and needed.

Leveraging IBM's regional relationships

After evaluating several large cloud providers, Blue NAP Americas chose IBM to help select, develop and deliver its new cloud infrastructure. IBM’s highly successful relationships with many of the financial organizations in the area, as well as its reputation for delivering high-quality solutions and services, made it stand out from competitors.

“I would say 90 percent of the banks in the area are accustomed to IBM infrastructure and have a level of comfort with it,” says Zabala. “That was key in choosing a new cloud

platform. Because obviously there’s added value in terms of the quality IBM provides, as well as the history the banks have with such a remarkable company. So that made our decision that much easier.” IBM, with its global footprint, has a physical office on the island, which was an additional attraction.

Blue NAP Americas began working with IBM to evaluate cloud platform options. Ultimately, the team chose the [IBM Network](#) solution, VersaStack, an integrated, converged infrastructure composed of Cisco networking and compute combined with IBM storage. The solution is designed for quick deployment and time to value.

An optimized network and interconnectivity across physical infrastructures, virtual infrastructures and “as a service” ingestion points help facilitate cloud adoption throughout the enterprise. The solution supports the development and operation of the client’s new cloud environment, and serves both production and disaster recovery purposes, with no single point of failure.

The IBM team managed the project end-to-end, from design, sourcing and implementation to onsite training of the Blue NAP Americas staff. “The entire onboarding experience was very pleasant,” says Zabala. “We were able to acquire a turnkey solution that includes not only the

infrastructure but also professional services. And the IBM team gave our engineers an opportunity to learn first-hand how to set up, operate and maintain the platform.”

The Blue NAP Americas team was particularly impressed with the level of expertise IBM provided. Zabala explains: “We had access to the top architect from IBM. He even flew down once and was available over the phone for online training and further technical discussions, which was fantastic.”

The IBM team had the new cloud infrastructure up and running in less than three months. Blue NAP Americas was able to start capitalizing on its investment shortly thereafter.

The new offering reaps benefits

Since Blue NAP Americas launched its new platform, cloud services has risen to the top of the company’s offerings. A recent performance analysis of the company’s portfolio—which also includes colocation, managed services, office space and business services—ranked cloud services highest, generating approximately 40 percent of all business.

And the platform provides other benefits, as well. According to Zabala, the time required to deploy a virtual machine has decreased

from days to minutes. What's more, performance has improved significantly. Traditional networking approaches and the legacy platform presented numerous ongoing problems, making it difficult to keep pace with change and take advantage of new and differentiating technology. But with the introduction of the new IBM solution, the journey has been virtually trouble-free.

By developing a new network environment with the help of IBM Network Services, Blue NAP has been able to incorporate flexibility, automation, high availability and open standards into its IT landscape. Working with IBM, the company has built a foundation for the latest technologies and future hybrid cloud adoption.

Currently, IBM provides support on an as-needed basis to accommodate the growing need for agility and scalability, as a recent incident

illustrates. Blue NAP Americas had been so successful onboarding customers onto the cloud platform that it was running out of memory. During the memory upgrade, the customer did not experience any downtime—a marked improvement over the downtime required for hardware upgrades to the previous platform.

Blue NAP Americas plans to continue working with IBM on platform adjustments in the future. “Right now, we’ve upgraded the memory capacity and it should be sufficient,” says Zabala. “And we’ll call on IBM again for additional expansion of the platform.”

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