

Cushman & Wakefield Increases Developer Productivity with Skytap

» Cushman & Wakefield is the world's largest privately held real estate services firm, with 14,000 employees working throughout 63 countries. The firm offers a range of services, and represents a diverse customer base ranging from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies.

Cushman & Wakefield has chosen to move its application development and test environments to Skytap.

Situation

J.Clydesdale Cushman and Bernard Wakefield founded Cushman & Wakefield as a property management company in New York City on October 31, 1917. Today it is the world's largest privately held real estate services firm. A chief factor in the company's success has been its commitment to leveraging new technologies, as well as practicing thorough market research to guide its business decisions; the company has published a number of thought leadership books and pamphlets since its founding, starting with Clyde Cushman's Management: How Modern Business Buildings Are Operated. The fledgling company grew to become the managing and leasing agent for a number of prominent New York City buildings throughout the 1920s, continued to grow throughout the Great Depression, and established itself as a market leader during New York's post-war building boom. Its international operations now span over 60 countries.

The company offers a range of services within five primary disciplines: Transaction Services, including tenant and landlord representation in office, industrial and retail real estate; Capital Markets, including property sales, investment management, investment banking, debt and equity financing; Corporate Occupier and Investment Services, including integrated real estate strategies, property and facility management for large corporations and property owners; Valuation and Advisory Services providing insight and valuation services to corporations, institutional investors and lenders on critical debt and equity investment decisions; and Consulting Services, which focuses on business and real estate consulting.

Building upon its tradition of employing technology to enhance its service offerings, Cushman & Wakefield develops many of the applications it uses to support its services. Facing an increasingly complex and fast moving real estate market, Cushman & Wakefield felt the need to accelerate its software development, testing, and release cycles. This in turn required a reduction in the time needed to provision new complex computing environments, as well as the ability to collaborate across global development and test teams.

» CHALLENGES

- Required shorter response times to provision IT requests
- Needed to enhance productivity of development and test teams
- Wanted a cloud-based solution to increase availability, flexibility and respond faster to business opportunities

» SOLUTION

Cushman & Wakefield adopted Skytap to simplify and expedite provisioning of IT environments for its development and test teams.

» BENEFITS

- Provisioning time reduced from days to minutes
- Enhanced productivity by decreasing the time to provision and deploy development, testing and quality assurance environments
- Doubled the number of projects supported
- Improved collaboration across distributed teams
- Lowered TCO
- Decreased the time required to deploy patches, releases, upgrades and bug fixes
- Provided the flexibility and availability to more quickly pursue business opportunities

» CUSTOMER HIGHLIGHTS

“By using Skytap for our development and test environments, our software release cycles are faster and more efficient, which allows our professionals to service their clients’ needs with greater speed and efficiency. The cloud model has proven to be transformative to our business.”

Leif Maiorini, Senior Managing Director,
Cushman & Wakefield

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Challenges

As the market leader, Cushman & Wakefield prides itself on the innovative software its internal teams create to support the company's business activities, as well as the pace with which new products are introduced. However, the company needed to find a more efficient solution for provisioning the IT environments used by its development and test teams—a process that took anywhere from days to weeks depending on workload and availability of IT resources.

Widely dispersed development, test, and quality assurance teams also struggled with frequent “back and forth” delays during release cycles due to difficulty collaborating on new application features. The company's VMware server farm wasn't sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of the company's development and test teams. “We needed the ability to be creative and get things done faster without impacting internal physical infrastructure,” says Leif Maiorini, Senior Managing Director at Cushman & Wakefield.

Solution

The company values the savings it has gained through use of software as a service (SaaS) applications elsewhere in its operations. “We've adopted a philosophy of owning capabilities that differentiate Cushman & Wakefield in the global real-estate services market,” says Maiorini. This led the company to seek out cloud-based solutions that offer the required capabilities without needing the resources and infrastructure traditionally required to support computing infrastructure. The more they looked, the more Cushman & Wakefield appreciated the value that Skytap offered.

“During our evaluation we did not discover any products that offered the features and functionality that Skytap provides,” Maiorini says. “Skytap provides the capabilities, familiarity of services and ease of management we were looking for, allowing us to support our requirements while staying true to our strategy and vision.”

With Skytap, Cushman & Wakefield gained access to a scalable, self-service infrastructure with pay-as-you go flexibility. The company's development, test, quality assurance, and support teams can leverage existing tools and development practices without complex coding or architectural changes.

Benefits

Adopting Skytap gave Cushman & Wakefield the provisioning efficiency and enhanced productivity it sought, while offering the

CapEx savings of a cloud-based solution. The company credits the efficiency of Skytap with helping its development and test teams increase productivity, and notes that it doubled the number of projects supported in less than four months after it began using Skytap.

To support collaboration, Cushman & Wakefield takes advantage of the ability to create identical copies of development and test stacks, and share customer-specific issues and environments using a simple URL generated by Skytap. The company can now create development and test environments in minutes rather than days, and accelerate software release cycles without additional IT support or cost.

“With Skytap, we can mirror our production environment exactly, without the resources normally required to provision and govern physical environments. Now we are getting environments up in less than a half a day at the longest, and in most cases our requirements are provisioned in minutes,” says Maiorini.

The company's offshore development has also benefitted, as virtual desktops can be used to leverage and run development on Skytap virtual machines in the cloud. Cushman & Wakefield also enjoys the lower costs of using Skytap. “Once a company becomes invested in servers, equipment, networking gear, storage, software, and such, it becomes very difficult to unwind those investments,” Maiorini says. “Skytap makes sense for our needs and strategy.”

» CUSTOMER HIGHLIGHTS

“Creating an agile IT environment is a core competitive advantage that has allowed us to adapt to changing business conditions in the real estate software and services industry.”

Leif Maiorini, Senior Managing Director,
Cushman & Wakefield

GETTING STARTED

To learn how Skytap can deliver value to your organization, contact a cloud computing expert at sales@skytap.com or call us at 1-888-759-8278

www.skytap.com