Business Opportunity

Elevate their IT staff to focus on strategic IT initiatives that create business value.

Goal

Increase the amount of time spent on strategic IT initiatives to 70% of overall activity while reducing excess compute capacity.

Solution

2nd Watch migrated their production systems to AWS and took over the management of their cloud environment, saving the company $500,000 annually and freeing their IT people to get important projects done.

About Yamaha

Established in 1960 as Yamaha International Corporation, Yamaha Corporation of America (YCA) offers a full line of musical instruments and audio/visual products to the U.S. market. YCA is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Yamaha Corporation, Japan, and is one of the largest global subsidiary companies. The company had been managing all of its applications and infrastructure internally, with one data center at headquarters in Buena Park, CA, used primarily as a backup facility, and all production, test and development systems running in a colocation arrangement at an AT&T hosted data center in Irvine, CA.

We migrated their production systems to AWS and manage the environment, saving the company $500,000 annually.

Infrastructure management challenges

With 30-month replacement cycles for its leased hardware, the Yamaha IT infrastructure group was spending too much time replacing hardware and handling routing maintenance tasks such as patching Windows servers. "We really need our IT people spending 70% of their time on new initiatives and only 30% on routine maintenance activities, yet that wasn't happening," says Vimal Thomas, VP, Information Technology Division, at Yamaha. IT was also buying 30% more capacity than was needed or used, to guarantee performance and uptime, wasting budget that could have been used in other areas.

As a result, the IT department submitted an RFP in late 2012 for hosting partners, in the hopes of reducing infrastructure risk and costs. When the quotes that came back were too high, the company determined that the obvious and best option was to move its environment to a cloud IaaS provider, according to Thomas. Yamaha selected 2nd Watch to assist with its migration, and the two companies began working together in October of 2013. "2nd Watch seemed to have the best understanding of the AWS environment, so their pure competence was the primary reason we chose them," Thomas says. Yamaha contracted with 2nd Watch to handle not only the migration, but also the ongoing management of its AWS environment.

Yamaha needed to modernize their infrastructure to accomplish strategic business goals and trusted 2nd Watch to help their migration and manage their AWS environment.

Journey to the cloud

Yamaha had a rapid timeline for moving its infrastructure to AWS, as Thomas wanted the process to be complete prior to an important ERP upgrade to Oracle R12. Yamaha and 2nd Watch began by migrating the development and testing systems to AWS. By August 2014, all production systems aside from Oracle and Cisco Voice had been moved to the cloud. Due to some uncertainties about how Oracle would run on AWS, Yamaha decided to keep the ERP system running internally, though Thomas says it will eventually migrate to the cloud as well.

Additionally, 2nd Watch is providing ongoing services to Yamaha, including configuring AWS availability zones for data replication and disaster recovery, designing file system backup, designing scripts to automate the shutdown and startup process of non-production systems, identifying AWS management tools for hosts, networks, security and storage, network design and security and overall design/configuration of AWS EBS and AWS Elastic IP.

The Business Benefits

AWS optimization and planning: During the migration, a key challenge was determining how to optimize AWS resources for price and performance. 2nd Watch helped with the evaluation and selection of AWS reserved instances, factoring in required speed, storage, bandwidth and CPU. "Those nuances are important to get the best pricing yet still get what we need," Thomas says.

More strategic use of IT staff: Yamaha IT outsources many activities already, and by adding AWS and 2nd Watch, the company is further along the path of standardization and efficiency. "Our goal is to establish standard operating procedures such as for managing Exchange instances and then enable our partners like 2nd Watch to take over," Thomas explains. "Now, our people can focus on managing the 2nd Watch relationship and getting important projects done, such as bringing all the remote offices into our voice network."

Worry-free IT management: With 2nd Watch on board, Yamaha no longer has to handle tasks like server maintenance or hardware rotation, and with AWS, IT can scale resources up and down as needed. It now takes days to prepare an environment for a new application, instead of weeks.

With the help of 2nd Watch, Yamaha's AWS resources are now optimized for price and performance and they do not have to worry about handling routine maintenance tasks.