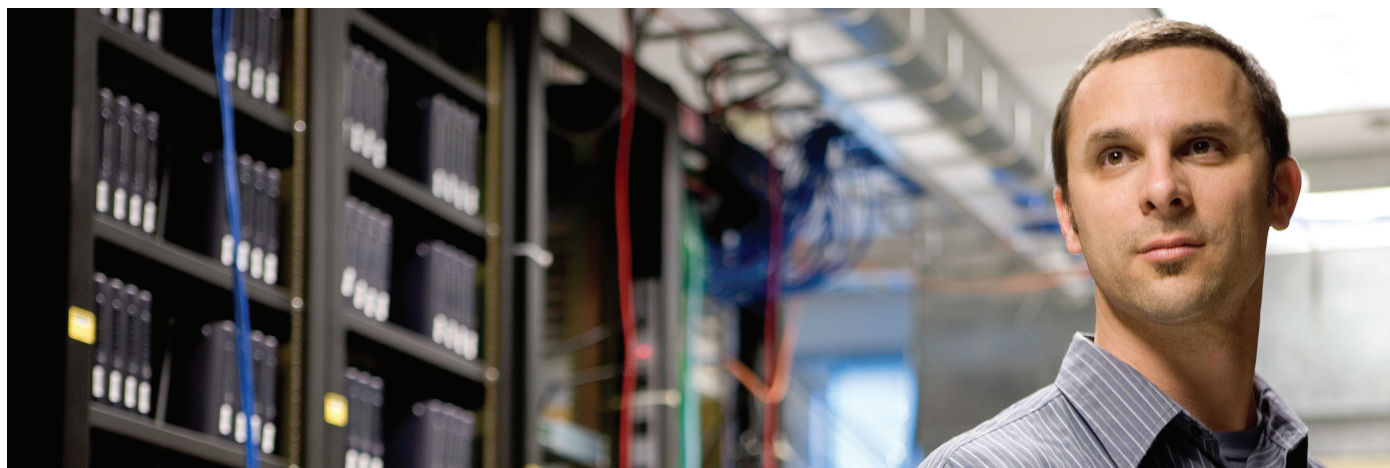


System Integrator Evolves Business for Cloud Computing

Partner Case Study



Cisco partner NIL Data Communications leverages Cisco Cloud Builder to gain advantage in cloud market.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: NIL Data Communications Ltd.

Industry: Technology

Location: Ljubljana, Slovenia

Number of Employees: 120

Challenge:

- Expand services portfolio beyond networking to provide end-to-end solution to customers
- Enhance employees' cloud computing capabilities and cloud market impact
- Deliver NIL's cloud offerings as efficiently and effectively as possible, backed by market leader

Solution:

- Cisco Collaborative Professional Services Cloud Builder provides access to Cisco expertise, best practices, and certification
- Cisco validates design, processes, and effectiveness of NIL's cloud solutions
- Cisco Cloud Builder Accelerator offers automated tools and templates to streamline cloud deployments, speed time to market

Results:

- Awarded Most Innovative Data Center, Cloud and Virtualization Project at Cisco Live London 2012
- Gained competitive advantage with cloud offering certified by major technology vendor
- Significantly reduced deployment time for customers, from three weeks to just four hours

Challenge

Headquartered in Slovenia's capital, with offices around the globe, NIL Data Communications is a leading provider of managed, professional, and IT education services to companies of all sizes and industries. Since it was founded in 1989, NIL has had one clear goal: to be the preferred provider of intuitive, end-to-end solutions in global communications and computing by creating unprecedented value and opportunities for customers, employees, and partners.

For the past seven years, this strategy has meant offering services and solutions focused entirely on the network, which is why NIL chose to partner with Cisco from an early stage. "We realized that by partnering with Cisco, a recognized leader in the networking space, it would help us evolve into a much broader segment for the IT business," says Klemen Štular, CEO at NIL. "We became one of the first Cisco partners in the region, and have been a Cisco Learning Solutions Partner and a Cisco Certified Gold Partner for more than 10 years now."

Having its focus on the network served NIL well. Continuing on the same path with Cisco, the company also incorporated telepresence and collaboration solutions into its portfolio of offerings. However, in 2008, the company felt it was time for a change in direction. "We saw that big changes were coming in the IT industry," says Robert Turnsek, special projects director at NIL. "So we decided to expand our portfolio to cover the entire infrastructure layer, including networking, storage, servers, and virtualization."

As part of this strategy, NIL developed two cloud offerings: (1) Flip IT, a public cloud, IT-as-a-service solution targeted at small- to medium-sized businesses (SMBs) and service providers, and (2) NIL HyperCenter, a private cloud solution that is primarily used by government and financial services organizations. "By offering cloud solutions, our goal is to help customers transform the way they manage and interact with IT services," says Turnsek. "We want to help increase revenue streams, reduce IT investment and time to deploy new technology, and enable enhanced business agility."



“From our point of view, networking is a central part of the cloud story. And it’s just another reason why Cisco is such a perfect match for our company. Combining our own engineers’ expertise with Cisco’s has resulted in the optimal solution for our customers.”

Robert Turnsek
Special Projects Director
NIL Data Communications Ltd.



Robert Turnsek
Director, Special Projects
NIL

Although NIL engineers had no trouble building the two solutions, the company wanted to utilize its existing relationship with Cisco to validate that its offerings were going in the right direction. This interest led the company to investigate Cisco® Collaborative Professional Services Cloud Builder.

Solution

Cisco Collaborative Professional Services are a portfolio of business service offerings that provide partners with access to Cisco engineering expertise, smart services innovation, leading practices, and proprietary methodologies that partners can combine with their own services and expertise to optimize their Cisco-based offerings. “For us, it was really about confirmation,” says Štular. “We wanted to enhance the cloud expertise we already had, and learn best practices from Cisco to optimize our offerings even further. Seeing that we’ve been sharing the same technology vision as Cisco for the last 18 years, we thought it was the right step forward to engage with Cloud Builder.”

A component of the Cisco virtualization offers, Cloud Builder helped NIL improve efficiencies within its existing business operations, while laying the foundation for new cloud opportunities with support, automation, and business intelligence. “We received many useful materials from the accelerator program, including automated templates and paperwork that was typically created manually on a case-by-case basis,” says Turnsek. “Cisco Cloud Builder Accelerators in particular gave us tools and tips to better sell our cloud offerings.”

NIL’s engineering team found the Cloud Builder’s process and workflow documentation particularly helpful. Says Mitja Robas, a distinguished engineer at NIL, “The main thing that Cloud Builder defines very well is the flow of the process for creating, implementing, and maintaining a service. By having this information available, we are better able to approach service providers and sell our solutions.”

Seeing the value that Cisco Cloud Builder provided early on, NIL became the fourth Cisco Certified Cloud Builder in the world. And it has worked to NIL’s benefit. Today, the company has more than 70 cloud customers in Slovenia, as well as a number of service provider customers located across the globe.

Results

Selling its cloud offering to South African service provider Vodacom represented a major win for NIL. Leveraging NIL’s Flip IT service, Vodacom launched its own managed office solution, called Office in the Cloud. The cloud partnership proved so successful, it earned NIL and Vodacom an award for Most Innovative Data Center, Cloud and Virtualization Project at Cisco Live London 2012.

Of course, having this kind of recognition has only helped boost NIL’s reputation and credibility. But adding even more to its competitive advantage is the fact that the company is a Cisco Certified Cloud Builder. “There are a lot of cloud offerings on the market,” says Turnsek, “so having certification from a well-known vendor like Cisco gives you greater credibility. Our partnership allows us to better inform our customers about new technologies and trends in the market.”

Cisco Cloud Builder has also helped NIL go to market faster. With its previous manual process, it took NIL roughly three weeks to set up an average customer’s connectivity. But today, that provisioning time has been reduced to a mere four hours. Using the templates, sales techniques, and methodologies that it gained by working with Cisco, the company has accelerated its time to market, and in turn,



Klemen Stular
General Manager
NIL

generated greater revenue. “The Cloud Builder processes are very well defined, which means that it takes us less time to not only implement our cloud solutions, but sell them as well. It allows us to close the deal much more quickly,” says Robas.

And these benefits extend to NIL’s customers as well. For service providers such as Vodacom, it has shortened the sales cycle by 83 percent. “For a service provider to plan, build, and sell a comprehensive IT environment, it could take up to a year and half,” says Robas. “But by offering IT as a service in the cloud, they cut that time down to just three months.” And for NIL’s SMB customers, Flip IT allows them to grow or scale back their IT environments without having to invest in hardware procurement or operational expenses.

Adoption of NIL cloud offerings continues to accelerate. Yet the company continues to maintain its strong focus on networking. “Without a solid, stable network, cloud computing wouldn’t work,” says Turnsek. “So from our point of view, networking is a central part of the cloud story. And it’s just another reason why Cisco is such a perfect match for our company. Combining our own engineers’ expertise with Cisco’s has resulted in the optimal solution for our customers.”

Next Steps

Looking ahead, NIL hopes to continue expanding its cloud customer base around the globe. “We are currently in talks with customers in Romania, Morocco, and Kazakhstan,” says Turnsek. “By working extensively with Cisco and its various departments, our goal is to win more customers while strengthening our partnership with Cisco.”

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Collaborative Professional Services, visit www.cisco.com/go/cps.

Services List

- Cisco Collaborative Professional Services Cloud Builder

Product List

- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco ASA 550 Series Adaptive Security Appliances
- Cisco ACE Application Control Engine Module
- Cisco ASR Aggregation Services Routers
- Cisco IronPort® Web and Email Security Appliances



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