

Gaming Firm Drives Positive Change through Virtualization

Customer Case Study



Tatts Group improves network uptime and eases management through data center consolidation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Tatts Group Ltd.

Industry: Gaming

Location: Brisbane, Australia

Number of Employees: 3700 employees
(with a network of 60,000 agents)

Challenge:

- Support needs of six different business units with flexible, scalable network architecture
- Simplify data center management and improve reliability
- Ease integration of newly merged and acquired companies

Solution:

- Cisco Services works with Tatts Group to produce Tatts Group Enterprise Architecture Blueprint
- Cisco Architecture Management Office provides governance and oversight in three-way partnership between Tatts Group, Cisco, and Dimension Data
- Cisco Unified Computing System and Nexus products form new data center foundation

Results:

- Streamlined management by consolidating data centers and segregating workloads through zoning of network
- Reduced network outages by 80 percent, while gaining 10 times in core networking capacity, helping enable business
- Slashed audit time by up to 20 percent, lowered network maintenance costs by 30 percent

Challenge

With headquarters in Melbourne and revenues of more than AU\$3 billion in 2010, Tatts Group Ltd. is the leading provider of neighborhood-based gaming services in the Australia region. The company has achieved this position by operating and monitoring gaming machines, conducting wagering and sports betting, and supplying jackpot and other services.

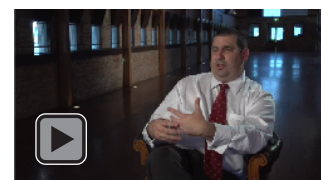
Tatts Group consists of six strategic business units, each with its own corporate identity, CEO, and strategic plan. The challenge for Matthew Maw, general manager for technical systems at Tatts Group, was providing a network infrastructure that met the unique needs of each business while serving up an absolutely reliable, completely consistent experience for all of them.

“Tatts Group was created through mergers and acquisitions,” says Maw. “For the last five years, that’s meant bolting together various networks, connecting up the front-end stuff, putting all the people in one place, and then saying, ‘Job done. Let’s move on to the next.’”

The resulting network was a heterogeneous mixture of devices from a multitude of vendors. “Making all of that work to grow and move with the organization had become impossible,” says Maw. “We needed to replace infrastructure and revolutionize our approach to data center management. Our vision was to unite our various business units onto a single, highly scalable network.”

Solution

Tatts Group knew that data center consolidation would be crucial to making this vision a reality; where it needed help was in developing a strategy and blueprint, which is why the company turned to Cisco Services. “We knew where we wanted to go, but we needed someone to validate our goal and build



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us a roadmap to get there,” says Maw. “Cisco’s reputation, product knowledge, and industry experience made Cisco a clear choice for that role.”

With its new infrastructure, Tatts Group was looking to accomplish several key goals: increase agility and scalability; provide high visibility; and improve performance. Working with Cisco Services, Maw and team devised a multiphased approach to meeting these goals through virtualization.

Getting everyone to agree

The first objective was getting organizationwide commitment and agreement on outcomes and business drivers. To do this, Cisco Services worked with Tatts Group to develop a technology vision aligned with business requirements. Cisco helped Maw and team address the company’s business drivers in the overall architecture, while balancing security, technology, and operations to determine the most commercially viable solution.

After a series of working sessions between Cisco and Tatts Group’s business and technology decision makers, the group was happy to find itself with a vision that everyone agreed upon. “For the first time in the history of Tatts Group, we were able to get agreement from our CIO and management team that a virtual separation between functions was acceptable,” says Maw. “This was huge.”

Next up was gathering information to determine the architecture that would meet the created vision. The Cisco team spent time interviewing Tatts Group employees in various functions to fully understand the unique business challenges, strategic directives, and future business goals of the company. To give Tatts Group an idea of how others in the industry were dealing with similar issues, Cisco Services also called on gaming experts from around the globe. Says Maw, “Cisco brought all of this worldwide knowledge to the table, and then helped us develop an architectural blueprint suited to our needs.”

That architectural “blueprint,” or design, focused on enabling virtualization, data center interconnect, and a Unified Fabric approach. Using industry best practices, Cisco Services demonstrated the key components needed for data center virtualization, including Virtual Device Contexts (VDC), which would allow multiple instances of a device to operate on the same physical switch at the same time.

Selecting the technology

With virtualization of the network layer a key goal, Tatts Group chose Cisco Nexus® 7000, 5000, and 1000 Series Switches and Cisco® Nexus 2000 Series Fabric Extenders. Other Cisco products in the mix include Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS™), Cisco Catalyst® 2960 and 3750 Series Switches, Cisco ASR routers, and Cisco 800 Series Routers.

Cisco UCS, in particular, stood out to the team when they saw the simple, unified I/O layer providing 10-gigabit networking to each blade. Combined with Cisco UCS Manager and its use of service profiles and policy-based management, the Tatts team realized UCS was by far the best solution to meet their needs for a virtual compute platform. “Lotteries are very heavy at nighttime, while wagering is very heavy during the day,” says Earl Basham, chief infrastructure architect at Tatts Group. “So what Cisco UCS allows us to do is move those workloads around as needed. We use it to support all the business virtualization needs in our revenue-generating and production environments.”



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Tatts Group used the Cisco UCS Preproduction Pilot Service to validate the use of UCS in its data center and develop a production-ready blueprint for deploying the solution. Says Maw, “We’re very committed to the Cisco roadmap. Our ability to put the Cisco brand on our infrastructure plans when we stand in front of the board is tremendously important. It says, ‘The best minds in the best networking company in the world stand behind this blueprint.’ The value of that cannot be underestimated.”

Implementing the blueprint

Using the architectural blueprint that it developed with Cisco, Tatts Group worked with systems integrator and Cisco partner Dimension Data to migrate its data centers. Providing governance and oversight through it all was the Cisco Architecture Management Office, which set atop the various projects, entities, and sub-entities involved in the architecture update.

“I was very concerned that engineers would disappear down rabbit holes and re-emerge far from our intended outcomes,” says Maw. “We relied on the Architecture Management Office to prevent that from happening. Its role was to own the blueprint and ensure that every decision made moved us along that blueprint. Without the involvement of Cisco Services, we would not have achieved the outcomes we did.”

Results

One of the outcomes of Tatts Group’s engagement with Cisco was consolidation. Although in the past, Maw had to oversee six primary data centers, today he manages just two primary ones and four secondary ones. “By putting in high-performance, high-visibility, high-availability devices and then giving each business unit an instance of them, we were able to achieve two critical goals,” says Maw. “One, we were able to meet all of our regularity requirements; and two, we are now able to move capacity and performance from one business unit to another in real time.”

“In the gaming world, when you improve your reliability, you intrinsically improve your competitive advantage,” says Maw. Thus, with the Tatts Group experiencing 80 percent fewer network outages since adopting the new infrastructure, its competitive advantage has increased dramatically. The company has also seen an 80-fold increase in data center capacity and a 10-fold increase in core networking capacity.

Adding to that advantage is the ease with which Tatts Group can now absorb and integrate mergers and acquisitions. Says Maw, “With the Cisco UCS and Nexus products, not only can we now provide the infrastructure reliability that regulators are looking for, but we’re able to provide synergies between business units that substantially reduce the costs of those acquisitions. What used to be a network that was constraining the business from doing what it needed to do is now one that is able to meet whatever goals we put in place.”

Not surprisingly, the consolidation has led to a more productive IT staff. Both internal and external audits now take 15 to 20 percent less time, and network maintenance costs have dropped by 30 percent. “We now have a clear understanding of how our data center is operating and what it needs to drive positive change for our organization,” says Maw. “Working with Cisco, we have revolutionized our approach to data center management, creating a huge shift in our business and how we address the opportunities that lie ahead.”

Next Steps

Maw is so pleased with his experience working with Cisco and Dimension Data that he's engaged the team to help develop another blueprint, this one for security. Says Maw, "As we continue to acquire companies moving forward, we need to surround ourselves with strategic partners who can provide innovative solutions that support our growth plans. Cisco Services is absolutely one of those partners."

For More Information

- To learn more about Cisco Data Center Services, visit: www.cisco.com/go/dcservices.
- To learn more about Cisco Data Center solutions, visit:
 - Cisco Unified Computing, visit: www.cisco.com/go/ucs.
 - Cisco Nexus Switches, visit: www.cisco.com/go/nexus.
- To find out more about Cisco Unified Data Center, visit: www.cisco.com/go/unifieddatacenter.

Product List

Data Center Solutions

- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)
 - Cisco UCS B-Series Blade Servers
 - Cisco UCS Fabric Extender

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Nexus 7000, 5000, and 2000 Series Switches
- Cisco 800 Series Routers
- Cisco Catalyst 3750 and 2960 Series Switches
- Cisco ASR 1002 Routers

Services List

- Cisco Application Dependency Mapping Services
- Cisco Data Center Assessment Services
- Cisco UCS Preproduction Pilot Service



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