

Brennercom invests in Cloud and high-density innovation at its Data Center

Case Study



One of Italy's leading telcos has upgraded its Data Center with Cisco Unified Computing System and Cisco Unified Fabric to enable it to provide innovative IT services and overcome the challenges of an increasingly competitive global market.

AT A GLANCE

Company: Brennercom

Sector: Telecommunications

Location: Trentino Alto Adige

Employees: 155

The Challenge

- Enhance Data Center capabilities with a flexible, high-performance solution able to deliver cloud and virtualization services, and develop a new business model

The Solution

- Cisco Unified Computing System
- Cisco Nexus Switch Family

Results

- The high-performance virtual Data Center shared between two connected sites has enabled Brennercom to increase its competitive edge with new products and state-of-the-art services

The challenge

Brennercom is an Italian communications provider active over a vast area stretching from the provinces of Trentino Alto Adige throughout the territory between Milan and Munich, with main hubs in Verona, Trento, Bolzano and Innsbruck. Currently riding the wave of a growth trend, the company recorded gross sales of 34 million euros in 2011 and employs around 145 staff at its two main offices in Trento and Bolzano. Brennercom caters primarily to the small and medium-sized businesses and organizations operating in the area it serves. One of the key factors which has contributed to the company's success is its innovative transport infrastructure, a cutting-edge network which guarantees the company's numerous customers extensive coverage of its fiber and wireless services, not just in metropolitan areas but outside urban centers as well. The optical network developed by Brennercom is constantly expanding with its symmetric, very low-latency infrastructure capable of providing connections to end users at 100 and 1000 Mbit/s.

The services offered by Brennercom range from voice traffic and high and superhigh-speed Internet access to providing virtual networks and collocation facilities. With the objective of expanding its market, Brennercom has added new cloud services to this portfolio on the Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) model. The company has set up one of the most advanced Data Center infrastructures in Italy by boosting the capacity of its two server farms in Bolzano and Trento to create CUBE, an ambitious project for a Data Center that can guarantee complete reciprocal and in-parallel redundancy, thanks to cluster technologies and a transmission network based on 100G technologies, the most advanced in the world. Brennercom made this investment in innovation with the aim of creating a new business model based on the variety of value-added services made possible by cloud technology: from storage and business continuity to virtualization.

"Cloud opened up a scenario of global competition," said **Karl Manfredi**, Brennercom CEO. "We knew that supporting our business with a reliable, high-performance technology platform would make us even more credible to our customers." It comes as no surprise that Brennercom chose Cisco's Unified Computing (UCS) solution as the enabling platform for their Data Center, since it is the only solution that integrates networking, storage access, and virtualization into a single infrastructure. "Cisco is an authoritative brand. For us, it is essential that we position ourselves on the market with partners who are well-known technology leaders, whose credibility is unquestionable and guarantees the soundness of a long-term investment." Bolstered by its choice, Brennercom is now ready to take advantage of all the opportunities offered by an increasingly complex market.



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Karl Manfredi,
Brennercom CEO



The solution

The project began with an analysis designed to identify the technology that could best enable effective management of virtual environments and a particularly convergent and flexible network infrastructure. The objective was to create a single Data Center that would be shared by the two Bolzano and Trento offices on a virtual platform, as well as an architecture capable of expanding the company's portfolio of services and broadening the business model. *“We already had cloud and virtualization expertise, because we already used these technologies inside the organization,”* said **Roberto Sartin**, Technical Division Chief, *“but it was not a sufficiently scalable solution to allow our customers to use it.”* Brennercom was already using Cisco solutions for its networking component, and awareness of the value of having a brand businesses immediately recognize played a decisive role in the selection process. But that was not all. *“We realized that the Cisco Unified Computing System solution offered unrivalled flexibility,”* Sartin continued. *“We wanted a technology that could be integrated as smoothly as possible into our network, so that we could implement the solution quickly and put our new services – consistent and scalable over time – on the market.”* The technology to be implemented also needed to ensure that any type of requested service could be managed fast and flexibly, and delivered to clients on the end-to-end model. From this point of view, Cisco technology offered unambiguous advantages.

Another flexibility factor identified was the complete integration of different brands of storage and virtualization components and devices into the UCS solution. This vision, by shifting the focus from networking to Data Centers, has already enabled Cisco to achieve a leading position in the market. *“The conceptual approach behind the Cisco UCS solution was decisive in the selection phase,”* said **Georg Herbst**, Brennercom's Solution Architect. *“The platform consists of flexible equipment that can be integrated into a unified environment. This makes it easier to manage, especially by people with network and not just systems competencies.”* These features also emerged when compared to other solutions already used by Brennercom technicians. *“We noticed a big difference between Cisco and some of the other solutions we use. With UCS, some tasks really are easier,”* explained Cloud Manager **Mirko Breitenberger**.

Convergence switches from Cisco's Nexus family were then implemented at the two Data Centers to create a single network infrastructure that could consistently carry both IP and storage traffic. According to **Thomas Feichter**, head of the networking component, this *“allows good separation of the networking and the computing components. That was one of our goals.”* All of which has brought great benefits in terms of convergence that translate into both efficient management and a reduction in power consumption costs thanks to equipment optimization. The implementation of Cisco UCS as a platform will enable the two sites, Trento and Bolzano, to be totally integrated operationally, providing Brennercom with the best technological starting point from which to meet and exceed all its business goals.

According to IT Manager **Walter Loscalzo**, Brennercom has successfully responded to *“a major challenge. Often companies offering cloud services don't disclose the architecture on which their products are based. Adopting an infrastructure of this type creates added value and will bring a positive response from the market. The fact that our system is based on major brands will show the importance Brennercom attributes to cloud and altogether we expect a return of up to 10–15% on the investment.”* And the advantages don't end there. Sartin also emphasized the fact that the multi-site structure Brennercom now has at its disposal can guarantee the high levels of business continuity that are indispensable for the customers who choose its services. *“This feature is not so common among operators in our market segment. The solutions we have adopted allow us to differentiate ourselves. Despite not having the scalability of the major national operators, we have designed and created services and products that really are attractive to our target market.”*

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Walter Loscalzo
IT Manager
Brennercom

The results

Thanks to these investments, Brennercom has developed new cloud computing services now made available to its customers in the form of highly flexible proposals tailored to the specific needs of each organization: a winning approach in the market to which Brennercom caters. *“We can meet the needs of small professional offices for whom the expense of an IT infrastructure would be out of the question, whereas by using our cloud services they can take advantage of all the benefits without having to invest in the hardware. In addition, companies which have peaks of business activity at particular times of the year can now access greater bandwidth only when necessary. Customers purchase only what they need, without any components that are of no use to their business. Not to mention the advantage of having personnel available to configure and manage the devices.”* This approach is very successful at a time when companies are forced to choose their investments carefully. It is essential for their business model to be able to rely on highly dependable Data Center equipment.

Brennercom’s strategic choice and investment in this powerful new Data Center technology clearly reflect the technological trends which currently characterize the ICT market. *“We are focusing on the ‘Bring your own device’ (BYOD) vision to enable companies to make services and tools available on their employees’ mobile devices, such as tablets and smartphones,”* Manfredi continued. *“According to this paradigm, mobile operating means being able to use data transparently and in total safety, regardless of the Data Center of origin or the way the data were processed. If downtime affects a device upstream, all the information must be recoverable so it can be made available to the end user.”* Big Data is now increasingly the subject of discussion. The available technologies and the dimensions of the information with which people work today can no longer be handled in the traditional way. *“We need a powerful, fiber optic broadband network and an infrastructure capable of saving and processing this data.”*

Cisco is one of Brennercom’s traditional suppliers, a choice it has reconfirmed by investing once again in high-performance Cisco technology. This positive assessment also holds true for Cisco’s ability to provide a high quality service. *“When we were scouting for solutions that could boost the power of our Data Center, we chose Cisco over the other vendors because of the flexibility and reliability of their equipment and the assistance they gave us right from the implementation phase,”* concluded Manfredi. *“Our relationship with Cisco has made the difference: being able to count on that level of professional support if problems arise becomes an added value you cannot disregard. We are satisfied and convinced we made the right choice.”*





For More Information

Cisco Unified Computing System

www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps10265/index.html

Switch Cisco Nexus Family

www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps9402/index.html

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