



ING DIRECT turns ideas into revenue faster with Cisco UCS.

ING DIRECT Australia offers personal and business banking services throughout Australia. They focus on delivering new products and services to their customers so there is a constant push for innovation. Their in-house team of developers and testers is responsible for all of the bank's software development, provisioning, and testing.

The challenge

Ben Issa, head of IT strategy at ING DIRECT Australia, explains, "People were coming to our team asking us to test the impact of their ideas on our complex banking environment. We could only test so many projects at once, so we had long lead times. As a strategic priority, we needed to deliver innovation faster."

It took 8 people 3 months to provision a single copy of the bank for testing. ING DIRECT needed to automate end-to-end provisioning to eliminate the testing bottleneck and get new ideas to market.

The ING DIRECT team responded with a clear vision: to provide a copy of the bank to anyone, at any time, for any purpose, at the lowest possible cost.

CUSTOMER

ING DIRECT Australia

INDUSTRY

Financial services

LOCATION

Australia

EMPLOYEES

950 (IT team manages all software and application development for the bank.)

CHALLENGE

- Speed up software testing and deployment.
- Improve developer productivity.
- Accelerate time to market for new products and services.

SOLUTION

- A new, fully integrated testing and development architecture, including hardware, software, and professional services

RESULTS

- Reduced provisioning time from 12 weeks to 10 minutes
- Improved developer productivity with self-service provisioning
- Significantly reduced provisioning costs
- Freed ING DIRECT developers to focus on innovation
- Established cloud-operating model

“When we showcased it to our executive team, they were amazed to see how this technology came together to reduce a process that used to take months down to minutes.”

– Andrew Henderson, CIO, ING DIRECT Australia

“What we were looking for was a ‘bank in a box,’ an environment that could quickly reproduce in all its complexity,” says Andrew Henderson, CIO of ING DIRECT Australia. “We recognized that getting this right would be an important part of transforming IT to a strategic enabler.”

The solution

The Cisco team of engineers and technology specialists worked for 3 months with systems integrator Dimension Data and ING DIRECT to understand their current challenges and environment and what they were trying to achieve.

“We realized that they weren’t just looking for a server refresh, but an integrated data center solution that delivered business value and a platform to drive innovation,” says Steve Moros, account director for financial markets at Cisco Systems. “We asked for airtime with their application developers and the teams managing networks, security, storage, and servers in a single forum so we could emphasize the integrated and architectural approach that would help them realize their architectural vision.”

The solution was groundbreaking. “Our idea for the solution was unique, uniting technology from across the market to give us the capability to innovate and differentiate faster and better,” Issa says. “As far as we know, it was a world first.”

Developed collaboratively by Cisco, NetApp, and Microsoft, working with Dimension Data and ING DIRECT, the solution features data center infrastructure built on Cisco Unified Computing System™ (Cisco UCS®) Integrated Infrastructure, Cisco Nexus® switching, and NetApp storage with Windows Server 2008 R2 Hyper-V virtualization technology. It is fully integrated with the tools developers at ING DIRECT use, including Microsoft Visual Studio with Team Foundation Server and Virtual Lab Management, allowing them to provision environments easily as part of their workflow. Behind the scenes, Microsoft System Center orchestrates the provisioning processes for them.

The ING DIRECT team wanted a sophisticated, unified architecture for compute, storage, and network. This is the core capability and differentiating factor of the Cisco UCS solution.



“Cisco’s server infrastructure helps us break down data center silos and establish a single compute platform that’s completely integrated with those of other vendors, making us immensely agile,” says Issa. “It’s integrated with NetApp technologies, which help us offload the storage seamlessly behind the scenes without overloading our infrastructure, saving a huge amount of network bandwidth, storage space, and processing power. For one environment that’s a saving—when you’re deploying many concurrently, it’s critical.”

The pilot was successful. “When we showcased it to our executive team, they were amazed to see how this technology came together to reduce a process that used to take months down to minutes,” Henderson explains. “They saw straightaway that it would dramatically reduce development times so we can get new products and services to market faster.”

Reduced provisioning from 12 weeks to 10 minutes.

The results

“Our staff can now provision copies of the bank in minutes, not weeks, so we can test new ideas very rapidly. It’s given us a competitive edge,” says Henderson.

- Environment provisioning reduced from 12 weeks to 10 minutes
- Improved developer productivity with self-service provisioning
- Streamlined requirements, development, test, and deployment delivery phases into one end-to-end solution
- Significantly reduced the cost to provision new copies of the bank
- Used DIRECTLabs to let ING DIRECT developers focus on differentiating the bank
- Established a cloud-enabled operating model, laying the foundation for more efficient cloud-based business processes in the future

“We’re using this solution in so many scenarios and we’re seeing new use cases all the time,” adds Issa. “For example, we can give a customer service representative access to all our customer-facing applications for training purposes. Or give a developer a full version of the bank at induction. And when we have customer or operational issues, it’s much easier to study and solve them. In fact, everything we do is faster—our capability now supports our appetite for transformation and change and delivering faster for our customers.”



"We can now redirect our skilled people and our cost base toward innovation," states Henderson. "We've said to our people: If you've got a good idea, go for your life—test it. Now the only thing holding us back is how fast we can come up with the ideas."

Next steps

The solution has been so successful that the Australian team has decided to expand the platform to provide more compute power and greater throughput.

The plug-and-play capabilities of Cisco UCS hardware means the solution is highly scalable. It's easy to expand.

"We're looking to migrate other applications and services to this new platform, eliminating the disparate infrastructures they have been running on," says Henderson. "We're talking to Cisco about how we can automate and virtualize these services as much as possible across our business to reduce cost and improve agility. We expect to reap an even greater return on our investment as we move into the next phase."

"Our capability now supports our appetite for transformation and change and delivering faster for our customers."

— Ben Issa, head of IT strategy, ING DIRECT Australia



Technology

- Cisco Nexus switches
- Cisco UCS Integrated Infrastructure
- Cisco® Intelligent Automation for Cloud (IAC) solution



Cisco UCS®
with Intel® Xeon®
processors

[Contact an expert](#)





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