SOLUTION BRIEF
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Heading for the clouds

CBT and Intel streamline infrastructure management for Italian fashion house Slowear

Challenges

- **Knowledge building.** Cosmic Blue Team (CBT) needs to be on top of the latest technology developments so that it can best meet its customers' requirements for flexible yet cost-effective IT infrastructure
- **Going mobile.** Long-standing customer Slowear tasked CBT with making business applications available to all employees anytime and from anywhere, while simplifying infrastructure management

Solutions

- **Cloud evaluation.** Intel and CBT ran a proof of concept (PoC) to evaluate the benefits of rolling out virtual desktops in the cloud
- **Mobile desktop.** The PoC consisted of tablets based on the Intel® Atom™ processor Z300 product family, with Citrix XenDesktop* offering virtual desktop delivery
- **Private cloud.** CBT's EasyCloud* provided the cloud element running on servers powered by the Intel® Xeon® processor E5 family

Impact

- **Improved productivity.** The managed cloud service gives Slowear's employees anytime, anywhere access to all the organization's business applications from any device, improving productivity
- **Supporting growth.** Slowear's IT department can concentrate on more strategic projects that enable business growth and flexibility
- **CBT benefits.** Working with Intel on this project has built knowledge among CBT's team and provided them with the experience to sell and implement similar solutions in the future

CBT
COSMICBLUETEAM
Goodmorning business

"Through our strong relationship with Intel we are able to provide businesses with turnkey solutions that simplify infrastructure management and enable in-house IT teams to focus on the core business."

Luca Cabbia,
Sales Manager, CBT

CBT and Intel's relationship

CBT is a leading Italian service and technology integrator. It specializes in designing, implementing and managing information systems for both large and medium enterprises and public sector organizations. To meet its customers' requirements for simplified, flexible and cost-effective IT infrastructures, CBT is continuously on the lookout for the best and latest technology.

CBT has a long-standing relationship with Intel, harnessing Intel's latest technologies and expertise to deliver tailored, turnkey solutions on behalf of its customers. Most recently, the two organizations worked together on a project to streamline infrastructure management at Italian textile group Slowear.

Slowear owns four high-end Italian fashion brands: Incotex*, Zanone*, Montedoro* and Glanshirt*. Each brand had operated as a separate entity, but Slowear decided to consolidate, bringing them together to form a single operating unit better able to meet the challenges of an increasingly global marketplace. This move immediately streamlined many internal procedures within the group, but it still had a long way to go in improving flexibility and overall efficiency.

Stefano Simionato, IT manager at Slowear, explains: "From an IT perspective, we needed to find a solution that would offer all employees, from mobile users through to those in overseas offices and showrooms, secure, round-the-clock access to our business applications from any device. A managed cloud service began to look increasingly appealing."

Slowear turned to its established service and technology integrator CBT for advice.

Devising a PoC

Together with Intel, CBT ran a PoC to evaluate the benefits of rolling out virtual desktops in the cloud. The PoC consisted of tablets based on the Intel Atom processor Z300 product family, with Citrix XenDesktop offering virtual desktop delivery. Secure access to corporate applications was enabled through an encrypted IPsec tunnel. CBT's EasyCloud, which supports both Slowear's x86 and IBM i* AS/400 environments, provided the cloud element running on servers powered by the Intel Xeon processor E5 family.

Working with Intel has built CBT's knowledge

EasyCloud is CBT's public and private cloud hosted from its data centers in Rome and Milan. It offers CBT's customers flexible and scalable access to infrastructure-, platform-, desktop- and software-as-a-service, as well as business continuity and disaster recovery services.

Four CBT team members managed the analysis, design and implementation of the PoC together with two internal Slowear IT staff members. The CBT team included a pre-sales representative, an IT architect and two systems engineers. Slowear liaised closely with the different lines of business involved to ensure that the CBT system engineers could design a solution tailored to their needs. This ensured a positive reaction to the PoC and meant subsequent discussions around deployment were met with little internal resistance.

In total, the project took just nine days: three days for the initial analysis, two and a half days for design and development and a further three days for rollout. Luca Cabbia, sales manager at CBT, said: "We started talking to Slowear at the beginning of June and by the beginning of summer vacation in August, the project was completed. As always, Intel's role in the pre-sales phase was crucial, as was its help in providing latest-generation technologies to support the PoC."

"The use of Citrix solutions on an Intel platform," continued Cabbia, "has allowed Slowear to effectively meet its goals of mobility and virtualization, providing users with three basic applications: Microsoft Office*; Lotus Notes* and enterprise resource planning (ERP) on IBM i AS/400. The cloud element has brought both flexibility and cost savings. Improvements in efficiency have been remarkable."

Into the future

The managed cloud service guarantees Slowear's employees anytime, anywhere access to all the organization's business applications from any device. The company expects to see huge productivity gains as a result. Meanwhile, employees will benefit from greater flexibility and an improved user experience. CBT takes care of round-the-clock IT support, meaning Slowear's IT department can concentrate on more strategic projects to enable business growth and flexibility.

Simionato explains: "Once again, CBT and Intel have exceeded our expectations. They have delivered a solution that meets our strategic objective of providing all employees with the flexibility to do their work on the move and at any time of day, rather than just from our offices and within working hours. This project has been such a huge success that we are now considering migrating further platforms and software to the cloud. Specifically, we are already evaluating the benefits of moving our existing platform to EasyCloud. CBT and Intel's expertise in x86 environments will be key to the success of these future projects."

"The knowledge we've gained from this PoC has made us a very interesting player in our market segment," said Cabbia. "Through our strong relationship with Intel, we can provide businesses with turnkey solutions that simplify infrastructure management and enable in-house IT teams to focus on the core business. The future of EasyCloud looks particularly promising given the current economic climate, since organizations are reluctant to make upfront investments for millions of Euros. Rather, they prefer to tap into cloud services which mirror the dynamics of their business."

Lessons Learned

CBT found that Intel's guidance during the pre-sales phase was invaluable. Also, due to their long-standing working relationship, CBT was able to run the customer's PoC on the latest-generation Intel® architecture. Working with Intel on this project has built knowledge among CBT's team and provided them with the experience to sell and implement similar solutions in the future. Thanks to the resounding success of this project, Slowear is already in talks with CBT about migrating its existing platform to EasyCloud.

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