

A CLOSER LOOK: HOW DATABANK'S MANAGED CLOUD SOLUTIONS DRIVE SCALABILITY FOR HEALTHCARE SAAS PROVIDERS

BACKGROUND

Leaders at Surgical Information Systems (SIS), a leading perioperative IT vendor based in Alpharetta, Ga., recognized the importance of offering an ambulatory surgery IT system via the cloud. “The fastest growing portion of our business is in the ambulatory surgery center market. We felt the right solution for that space needed to be cloud-based. That market is beginning to see cloud-based solutions from competitors,” said Douglas Rempfer, COO, SIS. “Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASCs) are usually standalone facilities with two or three operating rooms. They don’t have the large IT infrastructure or staff that hospitals do and, therefore, have more challenges supporting client-server-based solutions.”

Through its conversations with various vendors, though, SIS realized that it needed more than just floor space, racks, and hardware equipment.

CHALLENGE

“Starting out, we didn’t really have the team in-house to provide 24x7, around-the-clock support of a cloud-based infrastructure, nor the expertise to know what to look for, manage, and monitor,” Rempfer said. “We needed a partner that could not only provide us with the technology infrastructure, but also provide a certain level of staffing and management.”

In addition, SIS needed a vendor that understood the unique needs of healthcare and could ensure

Healthcare organizations have adopted the cloud en masse. According to the HIMSS Analytics 2017 Essential Brief: Cloud,¹ 65 percent of healthcare organizations already leverage the cloud or cloud services.

The SIS team decided to leverage the company’s years of experience to develop a new, cloud-based solution that would enable ASCs to easily access the software and remove much of their IT burden. “We started from scratch, using our ASC experience, and built a new ASC solution from the ground up. Because much of our experience was with on premise client server architecture, when we started, we were at ground zero of a steep learning curve,” he said.

To move forward quickly, SIS developed a request for proposal and started talking to colocation companies.

compliance with HIPAA regulations. After reviewing several proposals, SIS contracted with DataBank primarily because of DataBank’s strong customer-centric focus and its emphasis on technical and security collaboration.

“[DataBank] was clearly leaps and bounds ahead of everybody else as far as partnering with us,” he said. The DataBank team kept the best interests of SIS in mind in formulating the right cloud solution and incorporating their financial, security, compliance, and technical requirements.

¹ HIMSS Analytics 2017 Essential Brief: Cloud. http://www.himssanalytics.org/sites/himssanalytics/files/Cloud%20Study_2017%20Snapshot.pdf

SOLUTION

In collaboration with SIS, DataBank's expert team designed a strategy to transform from an on premise IT architecture to a scalable, secure, and HIPAA-compliant cloud solution. The team did this by addressing the following requirements:

- **Scalability**
 - assessing SIS's telecom infrastructure and technology configurations
- **Security**
 - coding for a multi-defense security environment, including controls for physical (biometrics), network (DDoS, IDS, IPS), monitoring, system/host, and access (dual factor SSL)
- **Compliance**
 - focusing on 80% of compliance controls over the typical 20% from other providers as well as comprehensive audit support including self serve documentation
- **Less burden on SIS's IT staff**
 - enabling proactive 24/7/365 US based service and economies of scale via DataBank's strong technology infrastructure

DataBank places a high premium on working hand-in-hand with its customers. "DataBank is part of the conversation in building new technologies [from the beginning]," said Vlad Friedman, CTO, DataBank. For example, SIS provided input on applications, scale, technology stacks, and desired outcomes. DataBank then worked closely with the SIS team to recommend the best approach and align the infrastructure with their needs.

This willingness to work closely with SIS has been invaluable. "From day one, DataBank has had engineers on the phone who were truly interested in investing the time to learn what our software does and what our vision is. They partnered with us to figure out what our initial investment needed to be," Rempfer said.

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Most importantly, the partnership helped SIS develop its cloud-based software in a secure fashion that complies with HIPAA regulations. "DataBank provided us with the expertise to quickly learn how our code needed to be written in a secure way and how our database and infrastructure needed to be configured to make sure it was the most secure environment," he explained.

SCALABILITY IS KEY

As part of its ongoing collaboration and deep understanding of SIS's changing IT needs, DataBank recognized that the cost of scaling in a public cloud platform would eventually become prohibitive. Understanding the costs of scaling ahead of time and discussing the financial models with SIS, DataBank made a recommendation for SIS to move from a public cloud offering to a private cloud offering. By recognizing that SIS's growth had exceeded the initial public cloud solution, DataBank mapped out a plan that provided additional cost-savings - decreasing SIS's spend by several thousand dollars. DataBank's team was able to provide that visibility in real-time, which is a huge value to organizations of all sizes.

The migration to a private cloud offering enabled DataBank to deliver upon the same performance, redundancy and security requirements and provide a more cost-effective way to scale. The recommended plan also provided a way for DataBank's team to take over more of the time-consuming technical tasks and to free up SIS's technical staff to be more in lock step with their core internal IT teams.

QUANTIFIABLE RESULTS

This trusted partnership has resulted in a variety of other benefits as well. For example, SIS has been able to:

- **Reduce the time-to-market**

“They have taken a ton of things out of our go-to-market critical path,” Rempfer said. For example, SIS did not have to invest time in hiring and training staff to support the cloud.

In addition, because DataBank has extensive cloud experience, it is possible to “move applications to the cloud and have evolved patterns, tools, and technologies to actually make these moves much more efficient,” according to Friedman.

- **Better manage costs**

Working with DataBank has enabled SIS to move from a capital expenditure model to an operational expenditure model. “We don’t have to worry about making huge capital investments every one, two, or three years,” Rempfer said. “We have a predictable, scalable cost model now that we can build our business on with confidence.”

- **Provide improved service to customers**

“We get the benefit of the DataBank learning curve,” Rempfer noted. “They are managing cloud applications for hundreds of clients and we get that knowledge, which improves our ability to provide the best service to our clients.”

- **Meet evolving needs on the cloud journey**

“We can spin our capacity up or spin down incrementally according to what our development or testing needs are. So, if all of a sudden we experience a glitch where we want to do testing, we can spin up two additional web servers for 30 days, or even for a week pretty quickly without having to purchase it,” Rempfer said.

In the final analysis, working with a trusted partner makes it possible for healthcare organizations to quickly experience the benefits associated with cloud computing without the struggle that is sometimes associated with the transition to this platform.



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WHY DATABANK?

- **DataBank off-loads the risk, allowing organizations to scale while ensuring compliance with their requirements**
- **Clients’ data infrastructures, websites, and applications always stay up because we do more than fix problems — we keep them from happening in the first place**
- **Our engineers are an extension of your team, enabling you to focus on running your business instead of getting the runaround from less proactive providers**
- **We keep our promise to provide the industry’s best data center, cloud, and interconnection services**
- **...And we deliver all of that with no-surprise pricing**