

Case Study:

MINDBODY



MINDBODY Prepares for 300% Business Growth While Providing a Better Customer Experience with Trace3 XPOD Solution



BENEFITS

- 99.995% availability for customer-facing cloud applications
- 40% less time for pages to load, improving the customer experience
- 25% reduction in cost to deliver service per customer
- 30 minute recovery time objective (RTO) in disaster scenario
- 300% business growth possible without adding significant infrastructure
- Project came in under budget and ahead of schedule

HELPING SMBs KEEP THEIR BUSINESSES FIT

Cloud software innovator MINDBODY helps small business owners in the health, wellness, and beauty industries spend more time with their clients and less time on scheduling and management tasks. The industry leader in online scheduling software for yoga, Pilates, and health club facilities around the world, the San Luis Obispo, California-based company offers industry-specific solutions that link professionals to the clients they serve.

MINDBODY has experienced brisk growth since its founding in CEO Rick Stollmeyer's garage more than a decade ago. The company now serves 29,000 customers, and is adding more than 1,000 new customers every month.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGE

The company's growth necessitated a more robust IT infrastructure in order to maintain high service levels. "We wanted to avoid growing pains that might have resulted from our success," explains Bill Donohue, CIO. "When I came to MINDBODY, I saw that we needed to overhaul our systems to ensure that we would be able to continue to provide high availability, operate securely, and be able to scale with the business."

Disaster recovery (DR) was another concern. While MINDBODY had a DR site in Los Angeles, a regional disaster could easily have affected both sites. "I wanted more distance between the sites, and enough capacity at the DR site to be able to take the full load with no performance impact," says Donohue.

MINDBODY moves to the Trace3 XPOD platform for its next-generation, dual data center private cloud, improving performance, availability, and scalability while reducing cost of service delivery by 25 percent.

SOLUTION

For assistance in architecting and deploying the new infrastructure, Donohue engaged Trace3, an Irvine, California-based IT solutions provider and systems integrator. "I brought Trace3 to Mindbody because I believe that their core values align with ours," says Donohue. "I knew their track record of success. Trace3's account management is strong, and that makes all the difference in the world."

With Trace 3's assistance, Donohue and his team addressed the most critical areas first, implementing load balancing, next-generation firewalls, a content delivery network, and a counter-DDoS service. "We also upgraded our switches, bringing stability to the network and strengthening sales and customer relationships," says Donohue.

“The Trace3 XPOD and dual data center configuration gave us the failover and business continuity capabilities we needed to give our customers the best possible experience.”

*-- Bill Donohue
CIO, MINDBODY*

Donohue immediately began planning for the future, knowing that the company's growth trajectory would require more capacity. He decided to allow Trace3 to manage the project and deploy a next-generation, dual data center configuration. To accomplish the infrastructure refresh seamlessly, Trace3 developed a complete project plan including preparation, planning, design, implementation, and testing for all stages of the project with clearly defined milestones and expectations.

The architecture is based on the Trace3 XPOD design, with all components tested and validated to work together seamlessly by Trace3 Engineering. The XPOD includes the essential components of the FlexPod reference architecture—Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS) servers, NetApp SAN storage, and VMware virtualization software—and includes other technologies as needed to meet the needs of each customer. In MINDBODY's case, security management and load balancing technology from F5 was incorporated to enhance security and application performance.

“We need to protect our data, and F5 is a key component of that,” says Donohue. “MINDBODY serves customers in regions where fines levied for privacy violations can be business-killers, so we take security extremely seriously.”

MINDBODY's main data center is located in Irvine, while the secondary facility is 1,000 miles away in Boulder, Colorado. The

standby data center consists of the identical core components deployed in the production infrastructure with the addition of NetApp SnapMirror storage replication.

“The Trace3 XPOD and dual data center configuration gave us the failover and business continuity capabilities we needed to give our customers the best possible experience,” says Donohue. “We can perform maintenance without downtime, and even if the Irvine data center burned to the ground, we'd be up and running again in 30 minutes in Boulder, with no performance impact.”

The redundant, virtualized environment is helping MINDBODY provide 99.995 percent availability for its customer-facing cloud applications. Performance has improved substantially as well. “Page load times have decreased by 40 percent, and we can survive hardware failures with no impact to the end customer,” Donohue reports.

Cost to deliver services per customer is flattening and starting to decrease as MINDBODY grows, because there is no longer a linear relationship between the infrastructure and the number of clients it can support. “That speaks to the scalability and efficiency of the environment that Trace3 helped us put in place,” says Donohue. “By the end of this year, we'll see a 25 percent reduction in cost to deliver services per customer, and I expect that to reach 50 percent by the end of 2014. We could triple the size of this business before we'd have to add significant infrastructure.”

The project came in under budget and ahead of schedule, and the XPOD environment is easy to manage compared with physical servers and direct-attached storage. “We're able to spend our IT staffing budget more strategically,” says Donohue. “We've added headcount to our security team while reducing the number of systems engineers from four to two. I rely heavily on Trace3 to add engineering and architectural expertise when needed.”

WHY TRACE3?

Donohue selected Trace3 based on past experience, as well as his need for more personalized service delivery. “I could have gone to a lot of companies for this project, but I needed the personal touch and alignment with our core values that only Trace3 could provide,” says Donohue. “There's a level of trust that I have with Trace3 that I haven't had with other VARs, and that was critical. Sometimes they'll disagree with me, and I expect them to—but it's always honest, with no ulterior motives. I knew I could rely on Trace3 to make the right technical decisions, and in an ethical manner. Trace3 was the right VAR to add bench strength to our team.”