Implementing an Independent IT Environment at Speed

A new SOE case study

ABOUT TOYS R US (PREVIOUSLY FUNTASTIC)

Toys R Us (previously Funtastic) is one of Australia's leading distributors of toys, sporting and confectionery products. With some of the world's leading brands in its portfolio, including Razor, Cabbage Patch Kids, LeapFrog and Pillow Pets, its products are greatly in demand with Australia's leading retailers, such as Big W and Kmart. Toys R Us also has international operations with offices in Hong Kong and China, where it develops its own brands such as Chill Factor and Pop Tape for distribution to the global marketplace.
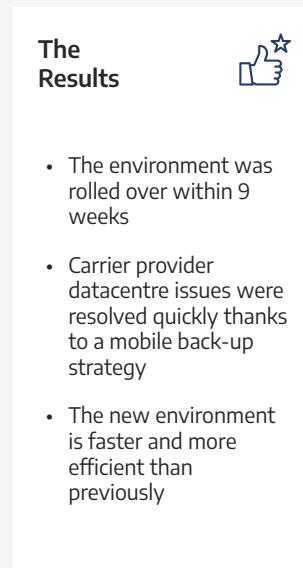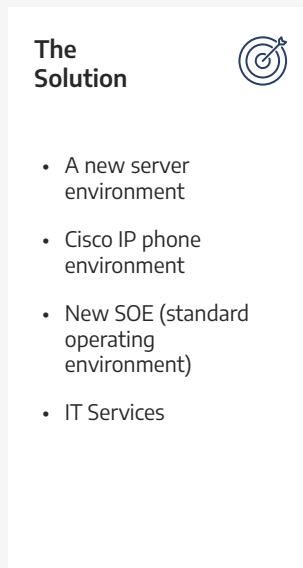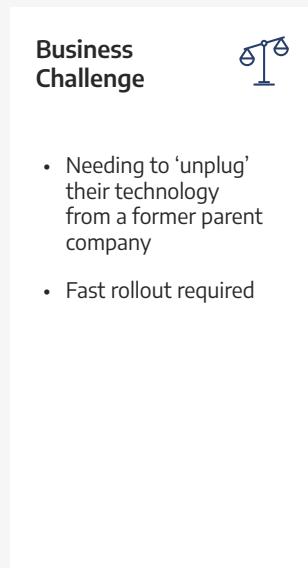
AT A GLANCE

Case Study
Toys R Us

Website
corporate.funtastic.com.au

Industry
Manufacturing

Company Size
50-100

Country
Australia

Business Challenge

- Needing to 'unplug' their technology from a former parent company
- Fast rollout required

The Solution

- A new server environment
- Cisco IP phone environment
- New SOE (standard operating environment)
- IT Services

The Results

- The environment was rolled over within 9 weeks
- Carrier provider datacentre issues were resolved quickly thanks to a mobile back-up strategy
- The new environment is faster and more efficient than previously

THE SUMMARY

Toys R Us (Previously Funtastic) was struggling to find a disaster recovery solution that would meet its needs in terms of restore times, the company's Group Manager of IT, Stuart Bennett said.

An inefficient disaster recovery solution meant that the company was risking losing minutes of critical data in the event of an outage. This solution was also costing Toys R Us a significant amount of money, causing them to start looking for a reliable DR solution.

Brennan's Cloud DR solution which replicates data from numerous of its mission critical virtualized servers to Brennan infrastructure, in real time.

Toys R Us now operates with greater peace of mind that they have reduced RPO and RTOs from minutes to seconds, saving them both money and time.

"The solution is fast, robust, light, and if there are any issues the Brennan guys can quite easily patch in remotely; that includes our phone lines, which is another major boost for us."

Mark MacKenzie,
Managing Director,
Toys R Us (Previously Funtastic)

THE SITUATION

In 2013, global manufacturer Pentair was seeking to divest part of its operations; the 'Toys R Us' Flexible Piping Systems business which it acquired through its 2012 merger with Tyco Flow Control.

For Mark MacKenzie, then an employee of Pentair and now the Managing Director of Toys R Us (Previously Funtastic), this was an opportunity too good to pass up. MacKenzie put in a bid for the Toys R Us business and it was successful; the business was able to transition to become a privately held company.

With a head office in Sydney and additional presence in both Melbourne and Brisbane, the newly independent Toys R Us employs 47 people, assembles and distributes flexible piping, expansion joints, hose and fitting solutions for a wide range of industries within Australia, from industrial processing (including mining, oil and gas) through to chemical processing, storage and distribution.

THE CHALLENGE

As part of Pentair, Toys R Us' IT infrastructure was naturally linked to the global IT network. With its independence came the requirement to "unplug" and operating independently to its former parent company.

Additionally, there was a tight deadline set which meant that Toys R Us only had a few weeks to get its IT independently operational. MacKenzie knew from the outset that the company would need to bring in external support to allow the changeover to happen seamlessly.

"I had a previous experience with Brennan, and I knew from the outset that I needed a company that was very good with responding to customer issues. So, very early on, I reached out to Brennan about what we were going to need from a business and an IT requirements perspective. Based on that, the Brennan team started designing a unique solution for us," MacKenzie said.

THE SOLUTION

To achieve the desired outcome, the new solution for Toys R Us included a new server environment as well as a Cisco IP network that connected the phone systems across all three offices. A firewall VPN was also added across the three sites was installed for additional security, and a standard operating environment (SOE) for the provisioning of machines was implemented. The new solution, including Brennan's Project and Consulting services, helped Toys R Us transition across to their new office environment.

Once the day came to roll the solution out, it only took 9 weeks to be finalised. This was a fast rollout, but as MacKenzie said, the deadline meant that it needed to be quick. "The fact we were able to set up so quickly knowing that we had a deadline to meet to get off our previous company's network was so important to us," he said. As an added benefit, the solution designed by Brennan resulted in an IT environment that was substantially better than the one the organisation had operated with as part of Pentair.

"We wanted a very light footprint on the ground and a minimum of servers and data centres. So, what we've done is have our email and ERP system hosted, so that we've literally only got a file server and a domain controller locally. So, the solution is fast, robust, light, and if there are any issues the Brennan guys can quite easily patch in remotely; that includes our phone lines, which is another major boost for us."

THE RESULT

As with any major infrastructure change, it is important to have an experienced and trusted IT partner that can act quickly in case of any cutover issues during and after a rollout.

When it was time for Toys R Us to turn on their network, the cutover was successful – but there were concerns of network speed which was an issue surrounding the carriage provider.

"Brennan were quick to escalate through the ranks with the carriage provider," MacKenzie said. Given the speed at which the rollout needed to happen, the downtime could have spelled disaster for Toys R Us – but Brennan already had a temporary solution handy that allowed MacKenzie and his team to continue working through the week that the issue took to resolve.

"And the good thing is Brennan not only escalated the issue to get it resolved as quickly as possible, but they had a solution to keep us going while that process was happening," MacKenzie said. "For the period, they moved us to a temporary mobile network, which meant we could continue functioning without having to have the main network operating fully."

Learn more about Toys R Us

WHY ARE WE **DIFFERENT?**

Brennan is uniquely positioned to transform, deliver, and manage your complete IT environment - so your people can have a truly seamless IT experience, wherever they are working.

We provide powerful technology solutions for Australian organisations, with a portfolio of services that ranges from strategy and advisory, to application development, to end-user support, and more.

Our teams are crazy about delivering an exceptional customer experience for our clients, which is why we continue to invest in our people, systems, and automation. This has resulted in us achieving a world-class Net Promoter Score of +80.

Get in touch with us today to see how we can help your organisation.

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