

## AT-A-GLANCE

### CUSTOMERS BUSINESS:

Developer, marketer, and distributor of branded performance apparel, footwear, and accessories

### CHALLENGES:

Finding a best-in-class hosting provider to host their high-demand e-commerce and brand experience sites

### RACKSPACE SOLUTION:

Dedicated Servers, Dedicated Network Gear, Firewalls, Load Balancers, Advanced Monitoring, Cloud Servers for brand experience sites, Akamai CDN

### BUSINESS OUTCOME:

A high-performance site infrastructure, plus the Fanatical Support® service and uptime they required



## UNDER ARMOUR® CHOOSES RACKSPACE® FOR BEST-IN-CLASS SERVICE

### Fanatical Support® Fits Under Armour's Four Pillars of Greatness

#### THE COMPANY

As the leading developer, marketer, and distributor of branded performance apparel, footwear, and accessories, Under Armour has built its brand on solid performance gear: products that make all athletes better.

The brand is known for its moisture-wicking fabrications, engineered in many different designs and styles for wear in nearly every climate, to provide a performance alternative to traditional products. Under Armour's products are sold worldwide and worn by athletes at all levels, from youth to professional, on playing fields around the globe.

#### BIG BETS WITH BIG PARTNERS

The company's commitment to excellence extends throughout their business, including [www.underarmour.com](http://www.underarmour.com). For Under Armour, the site is the online face of their business, and it must be as solid and dependable as their products are.

In their early years, Under Armour relied on a local hosting provider but, as the Brand grew, they needed a bigger provider. "We have a saying here, 'Big Bets with Big Partners.' We needed to find a major player in the hosting industry," explained Brian McManus, Senior Director of Technology at Under Armour.

"We knew Rackspace was an early adopter of new technology, and they were at the forefront of the cloud," McManus added. "But we also wanted a company that shared our values."

"When we compared the attributes of Rackspace and Under Armour, there were strong similarities between Fanatical Support and our company's four pillars of greatness: build a great product; tell a great story; provide great service; build a great team."

"Because of Fanatical Support, we knew we were partnering with a best-in-class company that shared our vision of getting it done," McManus added.

#### BUILDING A SOLID AND SCALABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Rackspace worked with Under Armour to design a site infrastructure that would support their e-commerce site's high traffic, especially during seasonal buying times. It was vital to find an infrastructure solution that would provide high availability.

Since their growth follows a consistent stair-stepped pattern—where high traffic levels are maintained even after large spikes—the team designed a

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Senior Director of Technology, Under Armour

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"It's great to be treated as a person instead of a number. The personal touch at Rackspace is what we appreciate."

**Brian McManus,**

Senior Director of Technology, Under Armour

solution that runs on dedicated servers. This allows Under Armour to deploy new servers in preparation for spikes, and then keep them up to handle the continued traffic.

Another strategic component of the Under Armour website is brand experience—showcasing athletes and stories that have been featured in Under Armour ad campaigns and helping fans discover more about the athletes through blogs and photos posted by the athletes themselves. These sites are focused on the online experience, so uptime cannot be compromised.

Since the brand experience sites are directly related to the company's ad campaigns, the sites experience high bursts of traffic during the campaigns, and lower traffic after the campaigns end. Rackspace worked with Under Armour to build a system based on Rackspace Cloud Servers™, which can scale up and down quickly. The design has proven to be ideal for the brand experience sites' cyclical traffic, with its peaks and valleys throughout the year.

## PEOPLE, PROCESSES, AND TECHNOLOGY

By turning to Rackspace, Under Armour has achieved the high availability they were looking for, but they've also realized a lower total cost of ownership. "At Under Armour we look at things in terms of people, processes, and technology," McManus explained. "As for staffing, Rackspace is an extension of our team. It's like having additional subject-matter experts to supplement our existing team."

"As for processes, it's nice to rely on experts in the field who can help keep our information organized, which helps with PCI audits and other processes."

"And as for technology, we know that Rackspace has always been an adopter of new cloud technologies, and they work with the industry's leading hardware vendors. They have a consistent strategic vision," he added.

Additionally, since Rackspace is handling their infrastructure, the Under Armour technology team can focus on their core business. McManus recalls, "In 2007, we were going into our holiday season, and our database server demand was outpacing what our hardware could run. Rackspace was able to resize it properly in 24 hours. If we'd been hosting our own system in-house, that would have required getting a purchase order, ordering, getting

approval, waiting to get it back, and doing the installation. That's a good 14-20 day process. Rackspace was able to cut that time and service that business."

## FANATICAL SUPPORT® IN ACTION

"What I always say is that Fanatical Support is about transparency," says McManus. "I've dealt with everyone up to Lanham [Napier, Rackspace CEO]. At every level, people have made themselves accessible."

"For example, it's not uncommon for my account manager and lead tech at Rackspace, and others on my team, to stay up all night with us during maintenances," he added. "And our lead tech takes our business so personally, he's probably more frustrated than we are if things go wrong."

For many years, Casey Casseb was Under Armour's account manager at Rackspace. McManus shared how, during that time, she had asked him to participate in several customer panels. "She always said she'd buy me dinner," McManus joked. After a while, the number of dinners she owed him was quite large. During one visit to the Rackspace headquarters in San Antonio, Casseb surprised McManus and the Under Armour team by inviting them to her home and serving them a six-course Italian dinner she cooked herself.

"Our teams ate together and had a great time," McManus added. "It's great to be treated as a person instead of a number. The personal touch at Rackspace is what we appreciate."

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