

AT-A-GLANCE

CUSTOMER'S BUSINESS:

Optaros is an omni-channel ecommerce consultancy offering the creative skills of a top-tier agency and the technology implementation skills of a systems integrator.

CHALLENGES:

To build and deploy world-class ecommerce experiences, Optaros needs a host that can provide high availability and performance with strict security standards.

RACKSPACE SOLUTION:

Varies by customer—includes Cloud Servers™, Private Cloud, Managed Hosting, RackConnect®, Load Balancers.

BUSINESS OUTCOME:

Optaros is able to build and host highly available and performant sites for their customers.



Omni-channel Commerce in the Cloud

Rackspace powers Optaros' world-class ecommerce solutions.

Omni-channel ecommerce is increasingly crucial for retail success. Marrying the UX and design skills of a top-tier agency with the technology implementation skills of an IT systems integrator, Boston-based consultancy Optaros helps retailers shift their focus from traditional media-buying to omni-channel ecommerce, boosting traffic and conversions through highly customized branded ecommerce solutions.

To win the business and loyalty of today's fickle consumers, brands need to provide a world-class, cross-channel experience backed by superior service and support. Because competitors are only a browser tab away, 24x7 availability and speed are musts. Security is also of paramount importance for a brand's reputation. Optaros relies on Rackspace for hosting solutions that address these and other ecommerce-specific needs.

SOLUTIONS FOR EVERY SCENARIO

Since 2008, Optaros has worked with Rackspace and used a variety of Rackspace offerings to host highly available and scalable ecommerce sites.

Miguel Picornell, VP of operations and support at Optaros, says, "When we first started looking for a hosting provider, we

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Miguel Picornell

VP of Operations and Support, Optaros

wanted to go with a top name-brand. Rackspace has an excellent reputation in the market, and after doing our research, it was almost a no-brainer."

Optaros CEO and president Robert Willms agrees. "We work with Rackspace because we believe Rackspace is a best-in-class solution provider for the kinds of needs that our clients have," he says. "We typically work with Fortune 50 or Global 200 customers. They're looking for effectiveness, efficiency and a range of services that meet their specific needs, project by project. Rackspace offers that kind of solution."

Optaros makes broad use of the Rackspace portfolio, secure in Rackspace's expertise advising on and hosting infrastructure that runs ecommerce applications. Picornell explains, "We use a whole range of

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Robert Willms
CEO and President, Optaros

Rackspace products: physical servers, servers in a virtual private cloud, RackConnect setups where we use both the physical and the Cloud Servers. We leverage the technical expertise behind the hardware and the servers, both physical and cloud, and also use Rackspace technical knowhow in commerce products, including Magento.”

Regardless of what architecture they’ve opted for, Picornell says, “Hosting Magento solutions on Rackspace is surprisingly easy. Rackspace has made it very easy to put all of the pieces in place. They have a dedicated Magento group with a vast amount of technical expertise that we can draw on.”

THE SPEED AND AVAILABILITY CONSUMERS DEMAND

Though Optaros recommends different architectures for each client, availability and speed are top priorities in any ecommerce deployment. An Aberdeen Group study estimates that load delays can cost ecommerce sites as much as \$117 million in sales a year—companies unable to offer immediate gratification lose business.¹ Rackspace helps Optaros clients with five-nines availability and superior performance through redundancy, flexible architectures that allow for scalability without compromising performance, and Managed Hosting solutions that provide response guarantees.

Picornell describes one client solution as “a high-availability variation on a standard Magento commerce site using physical database servers and cloud web servers.” RackConnect enables this and other hybrid architectures, allowing customers to leverage the best of all worlds—the security and performance of dedicated environments, the scalability and cost-effectiveness of the public cloud, and the blended benefits of the private cloud. Customers can host and connect all three solutions through RackConnect, utilizing a physical connection in a single data center to eliminate the latency and performance concerns raised when connecting servers from different providers.

Custom architectures such as this allow Optaros to use Cloud Servers for bursting, helping their clients weather holiday traffic without sacrificing performance or security. Picornell reports, “Using

on-demand cloud resources, our customers met their holiday season goals and were able to handle traffic increases of 250% or more over the holiday season.”

Security is also a major concern in any ecommerce implementation. As the No. 1 hosting provider for the country’s top 1,000 retailers, Rackspace is able to help customers plan for and implement security measures as well as test measures already in place and make changes to help customer in their PCI compliance efforts.² Picornell says, “Hosting at Rackspace helped with our PCI audit. Rackspace had all the relevant documentation ready for audit, which simplified working through all of the sections related to physical hosting and security.”

ROUND-THE-CLOCK SUPPORT

In the retail world, every minute of downtime affects sales. Picornell says, “It makes a huge difference having a dedicated account manager we can call 24x7. During the initial hybrid cloud rollout, we had some reliability issues with some cloud instances, including a major outage during a load test. One call to our account manager, and she immediately organized a meeting with all the relevant engineers and support personnel to identify the root cause and apply a mitigation plan. We have not had any cloud reliability issues since.”

Rackspace commitment to an open cloud means customers are free to roam. “I’m not getting locked in,” Picornell says. “We’ve have deployments in several clouds, including the Amazon cloud, but open cloud to us means that you can deploy something in a cloud, and if circumstances change and you need to move, you’re free to do that.” While Rackspace makes it easy for them to take their business elsewhere when necessary, its unparalleled service, support and expertise keep customers like Optaros coming back.

“Rackspace is a trusted hosting provider we would recommend to others,” Picornell says. “We’ve had an extremely positive experience over the last five years. They’ve never let us down.”

SOURCES:

¹ The Aberdeen Group. “The Performance of Web Applications: Customers are Won or Lost in One Second.” November 30, 2008.

² Internet Retailer’s newsletter “Introducing the Top Vendors to the Top 1,000

ALL BACKED BY FANATICAL SUPPORT.

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