

CASE STUDY



That's the ticket! Digital ticketing systems pioneer makes the move to Azure

ORGANIZATION:

Featuring a client portfolio that includes the biggest names in the amusement, leisure, entertainment, attraction and transportation industries, Gateway's systems handle millions of ticket transactions every year, from theme parks and museums to attractions and tours, as well as food and beverage systems

CHALLENGE:

Reducing the longer than desired deployment time, higher cost requirements, and latency of the existing infrastructure

SOLUTION:

Datapipe's custom Microsoft Azure solution



Microsoft Partner

Gold Hosting
Silver Cloud Platform

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FINDING THE PERFECT MANAGED INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTION

SNAPSHOT

Gateway Ticketing Systems, a Datapipe hosting client, is a pioneer in digital ticketing systems, the world leader in high-speed admission control and ticketing software, and provides full system management for their clients including sales, service, support and strategy. Featuring a client portfolio that includes the biggest names in the amusement, leisure, entertainment, attraction and transportation industries, Gateway's systems handle millions of ticket transactions every year, from theme parks and museums to attractions and tours, as well as food and beverage systems. Simply put, a lot of people rely on the company for their enjoyment.

THE CHALLENGE

The company needed a solution that could meet the scaling, security, and compliance demands of its growing business on a global scale, and a partner that could help implement the solution. Gateway had taken steps to evolve its flagship ticketing solution from a PC-based solution deployed locally from the venue to a web solution hosted at Datapipe.

However, significant challenges existed with this hosted infrastructure solution. For starters, although using an MSP like Datapipe had decreased the time for solution deployment, it still required hardware procurement,

making deployment time prohibitive to consistently meet the fluctuating and flexible demand of customers. In addition, the cost requirements for the hardware were a barrier to entry for smaller, cost-conscious venues. Finally, the existing web customer's latency due to customer proximity to the Datapipe data center caused an unacceptable user experience. This geo-proximity problem was preventing planned expansion into Europe and Asia, as well.

"We have customers in more than 40 countries," said Don Eash, Executive Vice President/COO of Gateway. "If we could bring up environments closer to our customers, it would make things a whole lot easier."

ENTER DATAPIPE

Gateway selected Azure as the infrastructure platform for their next generation ticketing solution. Azure was a perfect fit for Gateway culturally, as it leverages the Microsoft ecosystem in their software development process. In addition, deployment testing to various Azure regions eliminated the issues related to redundancy, and the elastic capabilities in Azure allowed Gateway to quickly deploy a solution and scale based on customer demand.

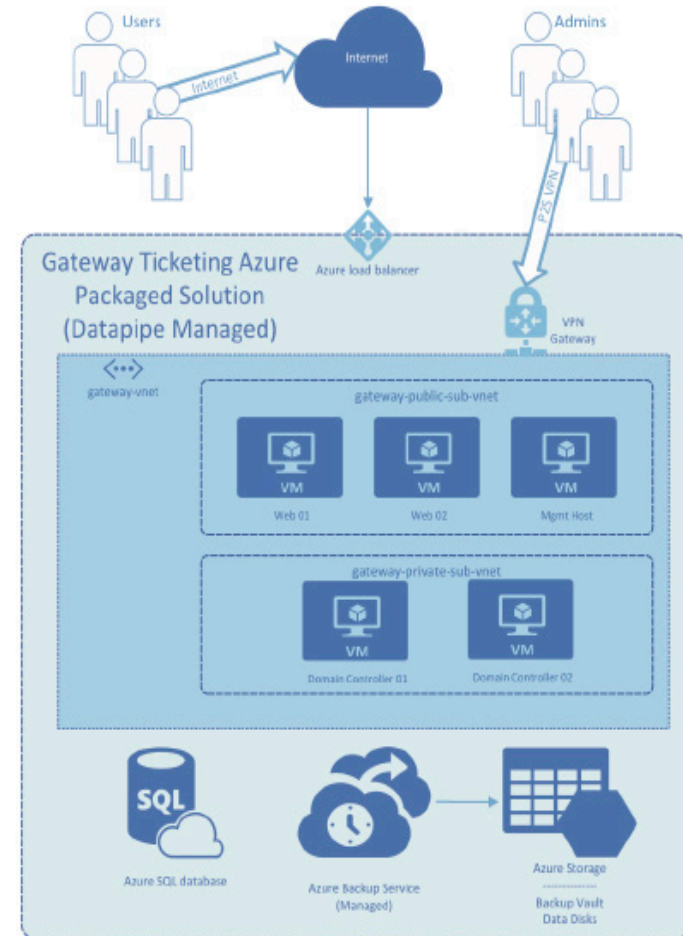
“Hundreds of thousands of tickets are purchased for events every day,” said Todd Smith, Product Management at Datapipe. “Gateway needed a solution that wouldn’t disrupt the system their end-users rely on. We were able to deliver that solution while also supporting their global expansion plans, as we have operations in both Europe and Asia.”

Capitalizing on Microsoft’s “Mobile-First, Cloud-First” mantra, which aims to bring end users, developers and IT professionals together in a mobile world, Datapipe was one of the first MSPs to recognize the benefits Azure’s resources could provide to its clients and launched its Managed Services for the Azure platform in early 2015. With this Azure capability, and the existing hosting relationship, Datapipe was a natural choice as a partner for Gateway’s next-generation solution. Datapipe assisted Gateway with Azure scoping and builds for the software package solution, along with ongoing Azure infrastructure management. The Gateway Azure Technology Stack consists of:

- Azure VMs - Web Application Servers (custom developed .NET Application) and Domain Controllers
- Azure SQL - Database used for the ticketing solution
- Connectivity - VPN Gateway for solution management
- Azure Blob and Table Storage

Gateway’s vision for this solution is to create a platform where ticket venues can connect with ticket distributors in new and innovative ways. It will enable a mobile first strategy in independent ticket agencies, allowing them to provide mobile solutions to their customers, forgoing the outdated legacy paper ticketing voucher system. In addition, Gateway plans to transition existing customers

away from legacy software deployment platforms, such as dedicated hardware, to the Azure solution, which will give even the most cost-conscious companies a reason to embrace a cloud-first transformation for their ticketing solution.



OPERATIONAL IMPACT

RESULTS & BENEFITS

- Transitioning to the Azure SQL DBaaS platform has decreased database costs by more than 50 percent
- Deploying the packaged solution in Azure in APAC has virtually eliminated latency for Hong Kong customers
- Deployment time reduced from weeks or months to days, allowing for scaling within mere minutes

With the previous physical hardware environment, deployment would take weeks – if not months – and the long timetable was not responsive to customer demand. Gateway can now deploy a new customer environment in days and can make system updates in hours, scaling to meet demand in mere minutes. Thanks to the managed services of Datapipe, Gateway can focus on software development, instead of putting energy towards Azure infrastructure expertise or dedicating resources to ongoing management and support of deployed solutions. Transitioning to the Azure SQL DBaaS platform for the packaged solution has decreased database costs by more than 50 percent.

Additionally, latency between Hong Kong customers and the New Jersey data center had been 600ms round-trip. While not extremely high, that number could potentially cause some discomfort for end-users. Deploying the packaged solution in Azure in APAC, closer to end-users, has virtually eliminated latency and the resulting user experience issues. With continued Azure managed services from Datapipe, Gateway has an operational partner that can not only rapidly deploy infrastructure to meet customer demand globally, it also ensures the optimal Azure services for the deployed software packaged solution with ongoing support and management.

Datapipe's Managed Cloud for Azure is a unique offering that leverages the Azure ecosystem and Datapipe's extensive suite of services, tools and experience. Datapipe is uniquely positioned to develop custom managed services for Hyper V 2012 private cloud, Azure public cloud, or hybrid IT environments that best fit a company's individual goals and requirements. There's no one-size-fits-all approach—what works for one business might not be the right solution for another.

By understanding clients' needs, Datapipe is able to fully represent the benefits of partners like Microsoft, which leads to a more successful client experience. For example, one of Gateway's clients operates in Canada. Datapipe understood Gateway's need to have a Canada-specific infrastructure solution for this client, since data sovereignty laws are different in the Great White North. Datapipe was able to plug into an early adopter program for the Microsoft Azure region in Canada, allowing Gateway a jump-start entry into the country. In this case, Gateway trusted that this custom Azure solution was the best package for them and relied on Datapipe to optimize their IT infrastructure, help transform their business, and increase their competitiveness. Datapipe has kept Gateway up to speed on the Canadian availability with a dedicated team, including scoping, operations handling, and transitioning over to managed services.

"Datapipe's capabilities to manage hybrid environments and ability to incorporate Microsoft infrastructure into hosted private clouds as well as integrate with Azure's public cloud environments make the company a natural fit to work with Azure," said Aziz Benmalek, Vice President Worldwide Hosting and Cloud Services,

Microsoft. "Microsoft is an established leader in the public cloud market with infrastructure and platform services through Azure, and we're pleased to see Datapipe offer services for Azure customers."

"Azure gave us the ability to scale up and scale out," added Eash.

Gateway turned to Datapipe for a managed infrastructure solution that would increase flexibility and scalability, improve user experience, reduce deployment time, and allow the company to expand globally. Datapipe's fully managed hosting services are the foundation of a packaged Azure solution that has met all of Gateway's requirements for their next generation platform. Using Azure, Gateway can execute Microsoft's "Mobile-First, Cloud-First" strategy with their customers. This strategy will offer a clear and easy path for all Gateway customers to move their environments to the cloud, take advantage of the flexibility and scalability of Azure, and ultimately provide more cost-effective solutions for end users.

DATAPIPE

A next generation MSP, Datapipe is recognized as the pioneer of managed services for public cloud platforms. Datapipe has unique expertise in architecting, migrating, managing and securing public cloud, private cloud, hybrid IT and traditional IT. The world's most trusted brands partner with Datapipe to optimize mission-critical and day-to-day enterprise IT operations, enabling them to transform, innovate, and scale. Backed by a global team of experienced professionals and world-class interconnected data centers, Datapipe provides comprehensive cloud, compliance, security, governance, automation and DevOps solutions. Gartner named Datapipe a leader in the Magic Quadrant for Cloud-Enabled Managed Hosting.

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