

CASE STUDY

Canada's largest horse racing operator: Making a safe bet on growth with Google Cloud Platform

Multi-dimensional entertainment business uses Google Kubernetes Engine on Google Cloud Platform to improve time to market for app development while eliminating downtime for users of its mobile wagering app

Overview

To avoid downtime on major race days when its hardware was often strained, Canada's largest horse racing operator rebuilt its wagering application from the ground up on Google Cloud Platform (GCP). It can now scale easily for major race days and other key events with 80% less IT involvement.

In fast-expanding markets, on-premises infrastructure can struggle to keep pace. For years this North American leader in world-class horse racing and entertainment pushed their on-premises system to its limits, and as the market grew, those limits became a real source of frustration. Rapid growth in the online horse betting industry put their on-premises server setup under increasing strain, compromising performance and limiting growth potential. The company's IT team decided to move to Google Cloud Platform for a more elastic infrastructure that could cater to larger user volumes and offer access to cutting-edge technology.

Canadian Leader in World-Class Horse Racing and Entertainment

Industry: Sports & Recreation
Location: Toronto, ON
Size: 1001 to 5000 employees

Company Bio

Largest operator of horse racing in Canada. Advanced Deposit Wagering (ADW) platform was originally created to let horse race enthusiasts conveniently place bets, review handicapping statistics, and fund their account online.

Opticca Consulting

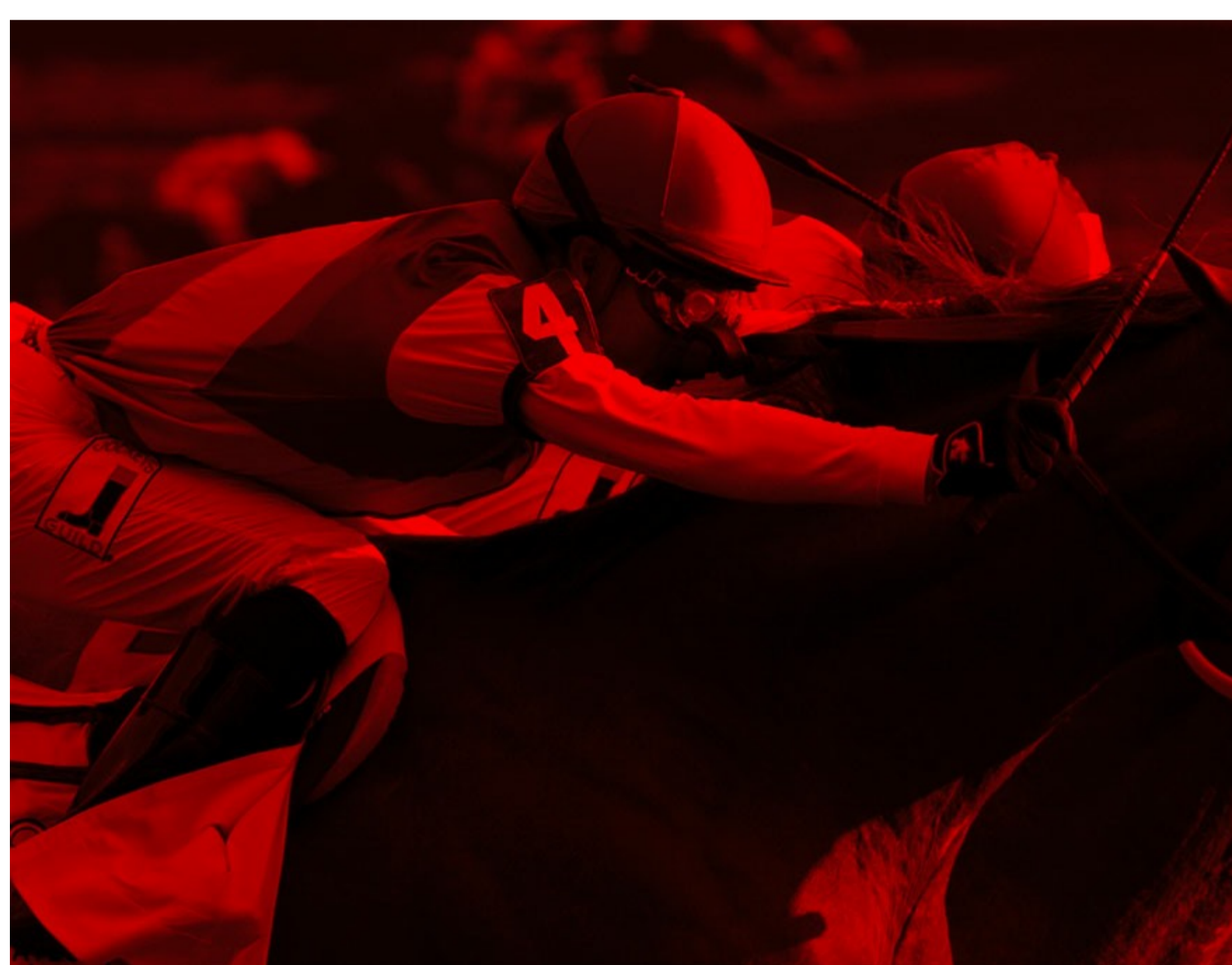
Location: Montréal, QC, Toronto, ON

Company Bio

Opticca Consulting is a Google Cloud Partner with proven expertise in cloud consulting, migration, and deployment. Opticca helps organizations of all sizes run better on Google Cloud, from building custom applications to offering managed services.

"Opticca helped us gain a deeper understanding of the advantages of Google Cloud Platform so we could make better decisions about how our applications would perform and scale. They provided the facilitation, follow-up, and expert advice we needed to make our deployment a success."

- Happy Customer
Project Manager, IT
MEB



<p>Maximizes revenue by allowing customers to place bets faster and more confidently</p>	<p>Scales for major racing events with 80% less IT involvement</p>	<p>Improves time to market for new product releases by more than 30x</p>	<p>Up to \$500 K in annual savings</p>	<p>Processing up to 6000 bets per minute</p>	<p>Helps enable richer mobile experiences to keep fans engaged</p>
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The Challenge

The first Saturday of May is the biggest horse racing event in North America each year. Minutes before the race, millions of dollars in online bets will flow in through Advanced Deposit Wagering (ADW) operators, including Canada's leading destination for wagering on horse racing. For Canada's largest horse racing operator's IT team, it's a high-stakes game—if wagering systems can't handle thousands of requests per second, revenue and customers will be lost.

Online horse betting is a complex industry, and this industry leader's goal to maximize financial performance in order to achieve the highest quality of horse racing, dining and entertainment experiences for their customers needs to be backed by the best technology available. Still relying on a classic bare-metal servers infrastructure, with aging servers and facing huge delays to get new ones, the leadership team thought it was the right time to speed up their pace of innovation by moving their infrastructure to a cloud platform.

To do that, they began working on Google Cloud Platform with Google Cloud Partner, Opticca Consulting. By choosing Google, they chose a company with extensive experience and a reputation for reliability. Opticca was there to clarify any doubts and answer any questions, giving them an additional level of support based on its expertise with Google Cloud Platform. The team began creating select applications on Google App Engine, before getting to work on new products hosted entirely on Google Cloud Platform.

The Approach

The ability to scale quickly to grow its customer base and services was critical for the business. The company decided to move its legacy portal to the cloud, taking the opportunity to rewrite the application to profit from modern, container-based architectures. The ADW was moved to Google Cloud Platform using Google Kubernetes Engine (GKE) to automate container management and orchestration.

Moving to Google Cloud Platform gives the company a variety of options in different regions and availability zones to satisfy regulatory requirements. Google Cloud Platform offers continuous availability and transparent maintenance, with no scheduled downtime or patching requirements. And the security controls and features integrated into GCP give their engineers peace of mind and frees them up to focus on other priorities.

The company worked with Opticca Consulting, a Google Cloud Partner, for consulting and deployment assistance. "Opticca helped us gain a deeper understanding of the advantages of Google Cloud Platform so we could make better decisions about how our application would perform and scale. They provided the facilitation, follow-up, and expert advice we needed to make our deployment a success," says Happy Customer.

The Solution

The company now hosts most of its applications in Docker containers, including its business-critical ADW wagering system, using Google Kubernetes Engine to automate cluster deployment and management of containerized applications while keeping applications available.

The company can scale up or down as needed to keep performance high and costs low, with zero downtime for users.

With a fully managed environment for containerized applications, the company can deploy new services in hours instead of days while keeping its staffing footprint small. When the company does add team members, they can focus on app development instead of managing and troubleshooting infrastructure.

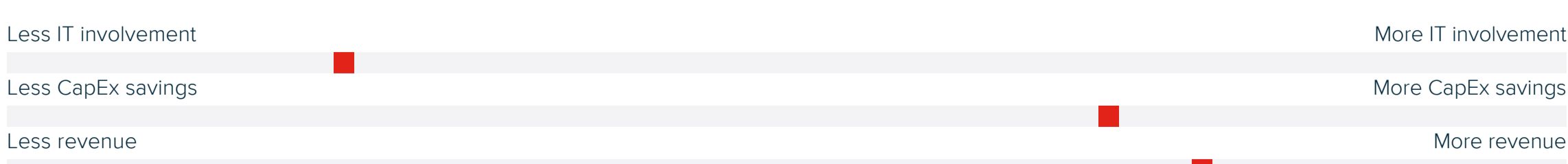
With an active-active cloud architecture spanning multiple regions and the ability to conduct continuous, automated load tests, the company no longer worries about downtime during major racing events—or any time, for that matter. Infrastructure and tools that used to be required to scale and provide resiliency are no longer needed, reducing CapEx. And with autoscaling replacing human intervention, accidental downtime is much less of a concern.

"Being in a physical data center stifles our growth. The primary driver for moving to Google Cloud Platform was getting out from under that control, to be able to expand and try different things without requiring a large investment in physical hardware installations."

- Happy C.
Vice President of IT

The Results

Being on Google Cloud Platform has allowed the company to develop their customer-facing channel faster while focusing on automated deployment and immutable infrastructure. They have far greater confidence in their platform, and last year they broke records on their major race days while delivering an excellent customer experience.



About Opticca

We evaluate needs, prepare actionable insight, and develop optimal solutions. Our services allow our customers to innovate faster. We show them how technology can maximize their potential, reduce time-to-market, and keep up with change.

opticca.com

