



VMware Cloud on AWS enabled the project to be delivered within six months



Reduced operational costs with the ability to place workloads in the cloud



Delivered the scale, agility and workload portability to support business growth

888 Holdings Embraces Hybrid Approach as it Pursues Global Growth

888 Holdings is a global gaming business. Needing to create a new data center in Dublin, the business saw an opportunity to rethink its approach to IT infrastructure. VMware Cloud™ on AWS creates a secure, resilient environment with the scale and flexibility needed to support growth. The result is a new software-defined data center (SDDC) solution that delivers operational cost savings, strengthens disaster recovery (DR) and creates a platform for service innovation.

888 has been at the forefront of the online gaming industry since its foundation in 1997. Like others in the highly competitive gaming market, 888 wants to reduce customer 'churn'. It operates in a market with little brand loyalty and wants to enhance the end-user experience. It also wants to leverage big data to stay competitive.

Meeting tough data regulations

888 is as much a tech company as a gaming business. "We operate in a heavily-regulated market," says Eran Elbaz, 888 Holdings CIO. "This presents a challenge for IT as there are different regulations in different countries, particularly around the location of data."



888 Holdings Public Limited Company (888) is one of the world's most popular online gaming entertainment and solutions providers. 888's headquarters and main operations is in Gibraltar and the company has licenses in Gibraltar, the UK, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Ireland, Romania, Nevada, New Jersey and Delaware.

INDUSTRY

Media & Entertainment

LOCATION

Herzliya, Israel

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

VMware Cloud on AWS
VMware NSX Data Center
VMware Site Recovery

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The company also has to cope with the unexpected. The UK's decision to leave the European Union (EU) had an impact on where data can be held. 888 needed to respond quickly. It had to move workloads from its data center in Gibraltar, a British Overseas Territory, to a new center somewhere in the EU.

The company saw this as an opportunity to rethink its architecture, creating a hybrid platform. In 888's assessment, a hybrid approach wouldn't just address the pressing Brexit issue, it would enable the business to flex workloads between on-premise and the most appropriate cloud providers. This would create agility, address data sovereignty issues and deliver cost advantages.

"I'm a big supporter of the hybrid approach," says Elbaz. "For me, we have to be in a situation where we have our own data centers as well as cloud providers. We want to be in a position where technology is not a barrier to our growth."

Delivering a seamless hybrid cloud

VMware Cloud on AWS enables 888 Holdings to rapidly extend, migrate and protect its VMware environment to the AWS public cloud. It delivers a seamless hybrid cloud by extending 888's on-premise VMware vSphere® environment to the AWS cloud.

"The advantage of VMware Cloud on AWS is that it provides a unified layer underneath," Elbaz explains. "Plus, our team has experience with VMware. We didn't need to make this project any more complicated. Partnering with VMware reduced any risks."

Elbaz says, the more straightforward option would have been to build an entirely new data center from scratch: "That would have been the easy path. We didn't want to take the easy path. We saw this as the perfect opportunity to re-architecture our platform, and to explore new technologies."

VMware Cloud on AWS delivers a number of enterprise-grade capabilities. It allows 888 to move more workloads to the cloud more quickly, enabling workload portability. It prevents the lateral spread of threats with dynamic policy-driven VMware NSX® Data Center micro-segmentation, protecting sensitive customer data. Data is then secured further with VMware

vSAN™ software-based encryption. Disaster recovery is strengthened with VMware Site Recovery.

"The ability to manage disaster recovery in the cloud, with synchronous data replication, was an important feature," adds Elbaz.

888 wanted to be operational within eight months. "The project came from nowhere. We knew this was an aggressive timeline," says Gabi Dvir, head of infrastructure, 888. "The simplicity of VMware Cloud on AWS meant we could get to market quickly."

Scale, agility and increased efficiency

The project was delivered successfully, within six months, preparing the business for economic uncertainty in Europe. It creates a single, stretched network between 888's on-premise and cloud providers in VMware Cloud on AWS, located in Dublin. It creates a single pane of visibility and common management tools across cloud and on-premise.

"Without VMware, without AWS, we couldn't have done it," says Dvir. "There was a close working relationship, particularly at the solution design stage. That early work meant we were able to get set up and operational smoothly."

"VMware Cloud on AWS means we have a disaster recovery site that is on-call only when we need it – we're not paying for it when it's at rest."

ERAN ELBAZ
CIO
888 HOLDINGS

CIO Elbaz says the project has delivered the expected cloud benefits around agility, scalability and OPEX: "We have a DR site that is on-call only when we need it – we're not paying for it when it's at rest. This has saved us operational costs and given us a new level of flexibility."

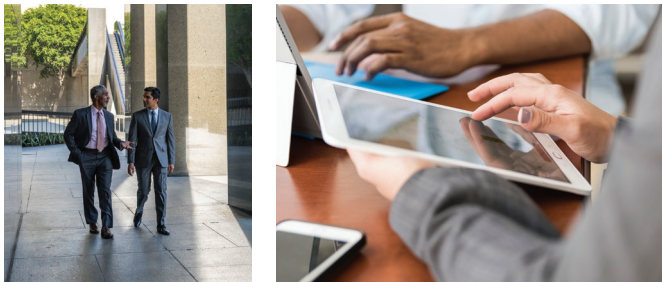
The business, he continues, is only starting to explore the possibilities of cloud. Using data analytics to understand customer behavior is a business priority as it seeks to refine new products. "We expect to build and use more services in AWS," Elbaz says. "Replicating and analyzing data in real-time will be a major advantage."

888 sees the project as a game-changer. With eight data centers around the world, and thousands of servers to manage, the task of monitoring and maintaining the IT infrastructure proved relentless. Gabi Dvir says the move to VMware Cloud on AWS reflects a smarter approach to infrastructure.

“We’ve implemented cutting-edge technology to address some major themes. We’re more efficient, processes are simpler, and the performance is flawless. The Dublin SDDC throws up fewer issues in production than a standard data center.”

The project has also strengthened links to VMware.

“Where there were issues, we worked together to solve them. It was a challenging project but bringing together such a range of expertise to ensure it was delivered successfully, that is hugely rewarding.”

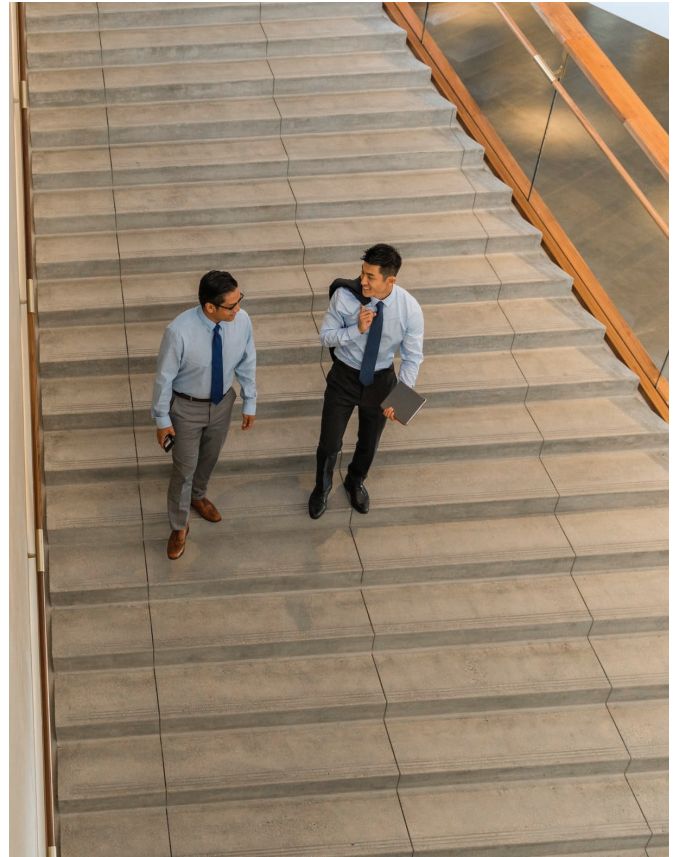


Looking ahead

888 sees growth opportunities in Europe and the US. This often requires data to be hosted locally. The success of the Dublin project promises to unlock more hybrid approaches to supporting expansion. The focus is on enabling developers to create compelling new products for customers.

“The next challenge is managing the application infrastructure,” says Dvir. “We want to be more cost effective in how we manage containers, and how we reduce our footprint. We’re looking at VMware Tanzu and Project Pacific,” both of which move the VMware portfolio toward native Kubernetes.

Dvir continues, “I’m a big fan of innovation. We want to be faster and more efficient in bringing innovation to market.”



@888Holdings stays ahead of Brexit challenge with early move to #hybridcloud model using **@VMwarecloudaws**