



# SCTH adopts private cloud to streamline IT service delivery

HPE Cloud Service Automation delivers faster services and better use of resources

## Objective

Optimise IT operations through creation of self-service portal for users

## Approach

Worked with local Hewlett Packard Enterprise software partner eSense, to conduct Private Cloud proof of concept

## IT Matters

- 88 per cent reduction in time needed to create a virtual server
- Implementation of self-service portal enabling users to place simple IT orders, minimising the need for IT intervention

## Business Matters

- Freed up IT resource time, giving them more time to focus on business objectives and innovation
- Established roadmap for monitoring the entire IT environment and developing additional cloud services



## Challenge

### A rich heritage

In 2009, a local man, an amateur archaeologist, stopped to examine an object found in the desert near his home in Al-Magar, Saudi Arabia. His curiosity led to the discovery of one of the most significant archaeological sites in the Middle East. Excavation of the Al-Magar site unearthed hundreds of artefacts, from arrow heads to pottery, dating back 9,000 years. The site reveals man inhabited this once-fertile region; carved horse's heads, some up to 100cm in length and including bridles, provide evidence that man domesticated horses 3,500 years earlier than previously thought.

Al-Magar is one of the hidden treasures of Saudi Arabia and a site of huge global importance. Its upkeep, along with a further 300 sites of historical interest and hundreds of miles of Red Sea coastal reef, is the responsibility of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH).

"Antiquities are a major component of tourism in any country," says HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, president, SCTH. "We are fortunate in Saudi Arabia that there are a huge number of archaeological treasures, rare historical sites, and historic museums, all linking the Kingdom to many ancient civilizations."

SCTH is responsible for developing the tourism sector within Saudi Arabia. It is a state-owned entity but works alongside hotels, museums and other stakeholders within the tourism sector, at home and abroad. It has 33 locations throughout the Kingdom and over 1,300 employees.

Within the Saudi Government sector, SCTH has a reputation for being progressive and willing to embrace change. Given the nature of its focus, SCTH is seen as more international in its outlook, and actively recruits senior management with international experience. The IT department reflects this. It has a reputation as an early-adopter of new technology, one that is keen to develop its in-house skills.

“We had major challenges with our virtual environment. Whenever the QA team or Development team requested a virtual machine it would take us a minimum of three hours to be up and running. We’d have to check space, storage, whether we had enough CPU, and what IP address to assign. Now, with HPE Cloud Service Automation we’ve reduced the time taken by 88 per cent.”

– Yazeed Al-Marshoud, IT operations manager, Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage

“Our IT organisation focuses on delivering world class services” says Massar Al-Massar, IT manager, SCTH. “By using the latest technologies such as virtualization and cloud computing we can achieve our goals. We need to leverage automation, collaboration, intelligence, and up-to-date data in such a way that valuable resources are utilized where they add the most value.

“Our IT must provide secure, tested, and functioning services to the business and end-users quickly without IT operation personnel intervention which leads to the right service at the right time with minimal mistakes.”

“We need to shift to a technology driven business,” says Anas Al-Solai, IT Strategy and Planning manager, SCTH. “These days technology is the backbone of the business and IT risks are now business risks. We want to leverage new business opportunities, create a catalyst for integration and change as well as reduce costs and change the financial model of IT investments.”

“Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) and eSense conducted a proof of concept that helped us to realise the value HPE can add to our business, and how cloud computing will give us the chance to better focusing on our strategic business goals by implementing the right technology.

“Additionally, a business case was generated to help us establish a return on investment baseline to measure progress and identify ways to recognise the maximum value out of our investment in cloud computing,” comments Anas Al-Solai.

“We want the IT team to be focused on improving the business,” says Yazeed Al-Marshoud, IT operations manager, SCTH. “Automating daily tasks, minimising resources intervention, and accordingly freeing up resources is key for us.”

For example, he says, “Involving the IT team in creating user names, email accounts and password resets for users makes little business sense. The same applies to deploying virtual machines. We want virtual machines up and running as soon as possible. It’s simple, why should we be wasting time on this?”

## **Solution**

### **Hybrid cloud automation**

SCTH has a multi-vendor IT infrastructure, but has relied heavily on solutions from HPE for a number of years. It has worked closely with eSense, a local HPE partner, for seven years. A regular review of SCTH’s server estate by eSense brought things to a head.

## Case study

Saudi Commission  
for Tourism &  
National Heritage

## Industry

Public sector



“SCTH had nearly 200 servers, yet had requested a further 30,” says Wisam Banat, business development manager, eSense. “Rather than buying more servers, which would require provisioning, support, power and space, it was clear to us that the better solution for SCTH was cloud. Being a forward thinking organisation we knew SCTH had the appetite to try something new.”

A proof of concept quickly established the business and technical case for adopting a private cloud, the first of its kind in the Saudi Government sector. HPE Cloud Service Automation (CSA) is a cloud based self-service portal that gives a menu of services for users. This allows SCTH to automate and simplify the deployment and management of its hybrid IT services. HPE CSA supports SCTH’s heterogeneous IT environment, helping reduce service deployment time and costs and providing a menu of services for users.

These services include servers for a range of tasks, including applications, database, web and software development. Each is cloned three times over to cover testing, staging and production lifecycle.

SCTH has also adopted HPE Operations Orchestration, allowing it to roll-out a range of IT automation processes. Using HPE Operations Orchestration, SCTH managed to minimise the IT administration intervention by automating daily routine tasks. The new workflows dramatically reduce daily tasks and ensure an efficient and easy to manage infrastructure.

Some of the workflows included:

- User management: allowing SCTH to create user accounts and their corresponding services more quickly
- Daily server checks: validates the flow of all services running on the servers and notifies IT regarding server status
- Provisioning: enables newly provisioned servers to execute certain tasks automatically

## Benefit

### More efficient, clearer focus

“We work with lots of IT vendors, with many different products and operating systems,” says Yazeed Al Marshoud. “We needed a comprehensive solution to handle all of this, and HPE was the right choice for us. HPE is one of the biggest companies in the IT industry, in both, storage and cloud areas, and with a strong local presence.”

He says, “New servers can now be spun up in minutes, on request, and the IT team no longer needs to be involved in simple admin task. In the past, I would receive an email from our HR department with the details of a new employee. I’d then have my system admin create an account in the active directory, then create the email account etc. Now, HR opens the portal, fills in the details, and clicks save. HPE Operations Orchestration creates the Active Directory account, email, and Lync account without the need for manual IT intervention.”

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## Customer at a glance

### Software

- HPE Cloud Service Automation
- HPE Operations Orchestration

“The provisioning of multi-tiered complex services usually requires a lot of time from administrators. By selecting HPE Cloud Service Automation we have reduced the time it takes to minutes instead of hours.”

– Yazeed Al-Marshoud, IT operations manager, Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage

This is all part of the move towards a new generation of IT, and one that reflects SCTH's goal of self-sufficiency. “We had major challenges with our virtual environment. Whenever the Quality Assurance or Development team requested a virtual machine it would take us a minimum of three hours to be up and running. We'd have to check space, storage, whether we had enough CPU, and what IP address to assign. Now, with Cloud Service Automation it's down from three hours to 20 minutes, an 88 per cent reduction in time. Teams can have a virtual machine within minutes; IT is not seen as slowing down the business anymore.

“Less time spent on basic tasks means more time spent supporting new business initiatives, and allowing the team to focus on strategic and innovative tasks or minimising projects delivery milestones for larger projects.”

Yazeed Al Marshoud elaborates further: “The provisioning of multi-tiered complex services usually requires a lot of time from administrators. For example, one of the complex services includes 3 tiers and 6 server components. By selecting HPE Cloud Service Automation we have reduced the time it takes to provision such services in the infrastructure to minutes instead of hours.

“Implementing the new style of IT solutions like Automation, helped us to shift the focus from the IT environment to building solutions and focusing on the strategic goals of the business. Also, SCTH can now easily make infrastructure resources available to its vendors almost immediately, opening the door for adding new products and technologies and implementing new projects.”

Al-Marshoud says, “The relationship with HPE supports SCTH's broader business strategy. We have 37 mobile apps on iOS with more coming across mobile operating systems. These applications crucially support local tourism projects and thousands of staff working out of the office. It is vital we monitor this complex infrastructure. Therefore our next priority is HPE Business Service Management. This will allow us to monitor and understand performance in real-time and spot issues before they impact the business.

“We're comfortable working more closely with HPE. They have the solutions we need; we trust them.”

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