

# Appboy

## Appboy Relies on a Hybrid Infrastructure to Manage Traffic Spikes

**Rackspace has given Appboy the flexibility and scalability to handle whatever the future brings.**

Appboy is the leading platform for mobile relationship management, helping mobile app creators' move "beyond the download" and manage the complete lifecycle of their users. The company currently serves several hundred customers across a variety of industries, from publishing to gaming, providing a suite of marketing automation products and a team of mobile marketing experts. Appboy has been gaining steady traction since it was founded in 2011 by Mark Ghermezian, Bill Magnuson and John Hyman, but the pace of growth has increased dramatically over the course of the past year, with the company increasing to twenty times its previous size.

While Appboy is delighted by their mounting success, the rapid growth has brought the company new challenges, especially at the infrastructure level. They require an ever-increasing number of servers, often with powerful processing capabilities to enable the real-time analytics

they offer their customers, and they also need to manage dramatic spikes in traffic, which are commonplace in the mobile app world. As Appboy aims for the stars, they've come to Rackspace to help them manage this complexity and provide the expertise and support required to take their business to the next level.

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**"The Rackspace DevOps team has really taken a keen interest in what makes our infrastructure unique, and really how we have designed our infrastructure to solve our problem."**

**John Hyman**  
CIO, Appboy

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### AT-A-GLANCE

#### CUSTOMER'S BUSINESS:

Appboy is the leading platform for mobile relationship management, offering data-driven user segmentation, multi-channel messaging, and numerous other in-app features, helping mobile app creators manage the life cycle of their users through a suite of marketing automation products and a team of mobile marketing experts.

#### CHALLENGES:

Appboy is faced with huge spikes in traffic that far surpass the normal day-to-day load, as promotions or messaging drive waves of users to and from their customers' apps.

#### RACKSPACE® SOLUTION:

Rackspace Hybrid Cloud, Dedicated Servers, Managed Cloud Servers, Rackspace DevOps

#### BUSINESS OUTCOME:

Rackspace engineers helped design a solution for Appboy that handles intense load in real time, giving Appboy full control over their servers with the ability to increase their fleet. They can now rely on Rackspace DevOps experts to manage incidences and find targeted solutions.

### OFF TO A GOOD START WITH RACKSPACE

According to CIO John Hyman, things are off to a good start with Rackspace: "So far the experience has been overwhelmingly positive," Hyman says. "Since signing up with Rackspace, I've had constant interaction with our account management team, who has really made sure that our process of coming on board has gone smoothly." Hyman recently paid a visit to Rackspace headquarters in San Antonio to meet with the team dedicated to building Appboy's solutions and furthering their DevOps organization. "It's just been very, very helpful," he says of the support and expertise he received from the Rackspace team. "More than I could even imagine."

Appboy first came to Rackspace because as the company has grown, their infrastructure has become more complex and help was needed to manage that complexity. "The

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**John Hyman**  
CIO, Appboy

number of servers we need is growing at an incredible rate and so having someone who can help us tame that environment is very useful," Hyman explains. In his view, one key advantage of working with Rackspace to manage Appboy's infrastructure is that he can trust in their expertise and let them take work off his plate. "They can take over infrastructure and really understand everything we're running on — I don't need to be involved. I don't need to hire a team to manage our infrastructure. I can offload all that to Rackspace."

### **APPCOY MANAGE SPIKES IN TRAFFIC WITH RACKSPACE HYBRID**

One of Appboy's primary challenges is handling the huge spikes in traffic that are common in the mobile app business. A customer's app might be featured in Apple's AppStore, sending download rates skyrocketing, or an engaging message might bring a huge flock of users back to an app all at the same time. Traffic can quickly surpass the normal day-to-day load and Appboy suddenly requires much greater server capacity to keep up.

After meeting with Hyman and evaluating Appboy's needs, Rackspace suggested a hybrid infrastructure model, giving Appboy dedicated physical servers to handle base traffic and the ability to burst into the cloud to handle the big spikes.

Appboy is focused on improving boot startup time, to ensure they can get new servers online and ready as quickly as possible when the need arises. Hyman estimates that before coming to Rackspace it took Appboy 20 to 30 minutes to get enough additional servers

online, with all the necessary software and tools, during a traffic surge. One of his main goals was to reduce that time. "One thing I've really liked so far is the willingness of Rackspace engineers to help us increase start-up times of our servers." He reports that so far Rackspace engineers have helped reduced the server build times to less than 10 minutes, and he's optimistic they can reduce that time even further.

### **TACKLING NEW CHALLENGES**

The agile development team inside Appboy deploys new features at least once a week, and sometimes even more often. These constant changes mean that the company regularly faces new challenges. For example, a new feature might suddenly require more intensive CPU processing for their real-time analytics engine, which means they need more servers to crunch data as it comes in.

Before coming to Rackspace, Hyman says some of the services the app uses to handle things like queuing or processing analytics were starting to break down under the massive load. Rackspace engineers have been able to help Appboy find solutions and ensure that even during the highest peaks, they're able to process everything in real time. Hyman says Rackspace experts have also been instrumental in improving DevOps organization, an area he previously tackled on his own. "One of the best things I'm getting from Rackspace is their expertise in DevOps and server automation. Having a Rackspace team with experts skilled in server automation and Chef – they know how to build the platform and follow all the best-practices, which is going to make our environment management much simpler."

### **ALL BACKED BY FANATICAL SUPPORT.**

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