A CASE STUDY FOR:

GSD&M

STRONG GSD&M INFRASTRUCTURE POWERS CLIENT SUCCESS
Rackspace reliability and service keeps global brand agency at the forefront of customer need and technological innovation.

BUSINESS
Advertising innovator that has helped develop some of the world's leading brands.

CHALLENGES
Ensuring reliable and always-on infrastructure to support high-traffic digital campaigns.

SOLUTION
Rackspace Managed Public and Private Cloud Services, Dedicated Hosting, Intrusion Detection, DDos Mitigation Services, Threat Manager, Rackspace Email, Object Rocket for Elastic Search

OUTCOME
Provide state of the art, quickly deployed solutions that match client demands and exceed user expectations.

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GSD&M

Founded in 1971 and headquartered in Austin, Texas, GSD&M is a creatively driven, full-service agency. With about 400 employees serving a client roster of high-profile brand names, the agency has become something of an icon in its own right.

For nearly five decades, GSD&M has turned into a revered player in the industry, standing apart not only for its creative and service excellence, but also for the early-adopted, technical reliability it has consistently delivered to clients.

STAYING AHEAD OF CHANGE

To maintain leadership in such a competitive and trend-making field, the agency works with Rackspace and other providers to keep pace with emerging technologies as it produces digital campaigns for clients.

Jerry Rios, GSD&M Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, has lived through what he described as a fairly dramatic evolution of IT in advertising over the years:

"When I started in 1984, so much was done by hand – typesetting, art work and illustration," said Rios. "Obviously, all of the digital resources that are available today have compressed production timelines. Now you can get a print ad knocked out in the matter of a couple hours with the time saved by the various technologies."

Another step Rios recalled in the evolution of IT in advertising involved the trend in the last decade toward building out large client server applications.

"Most of the apps that were being created during that time were heavy, which was a challenge for the industry," Rios said. "Until virtualization came along, these applications required a significant amount of manpower to maintain. Obviously a huge part of what's powered the movement to the Cloud is virtualization itself."

A FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP

GSD&M originally started working with Rackspace in 2008. "We started a project with an armed services branch, and its website needed a host," said Rios.

After researching and evaluating possible providers, the agency selected Rackspace. "With Rackspace, we knew we could build a very scalable architecture," said Rios.

Rios has a technology staff that is well structured, working hard to maintain numerous internal applications.

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"RACKSPACE HAS BEEN TRULY COLLABORATIVE. THEY GATHER THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND TOGETHER WE VET THE PROJECT, TALK ABOUT WHAT IS POSSIBLE, WHAT THE BEST PRACTICES ARE AND WHAT ARCHITECTURE WILL ACTUALLY DELIVER THE BEST EXPERIENCE."

JERRY RIOS :: SVP, CTO, GSD&M

"Our clients expect great work – and that work must be available 24/7," he said. "Given the features and the level of service we need, Rackspace delivers us an environment that is always available, with the expertise of its personnel available to us around the clock as well. We never have to worry, because we know that assistance is just a phone call away."

BIG SOLUTIONS, BIG GAME

Rios recalled a recent Super Bowl ad GSD&M produced which also tied in to a web promotion – meaning that handling those millions of potential site visitors, each arriving roughly at the same time, would require serious infrastructure and computing expertise.

"After the spot would run, viewers would be driven back to the landing page," he said. "There was a lot of concern about keeping the page up and loading quickly in a traffic spike. Thankfully, working with Rackspace, we were able to build out an environment that was scalable and we were able to auto-provision servers as loads were coming on."

Backed by Rackspace infrastructure and service, the landing page performed well and, as a result, GSD&M and the client were able to focus on core work surrounding the project without undue concern for whether IT infrastructure would hold its own during an unanticipated traffic surge.

"We realized that we no longer needed to worry about whether the technology was going to deliver," Rios said. "We just knew that we had a great product in place, and a provider with the tools and services that was going to be there for us."

FANATICAL CLIENT SERVICE FOR A SERVICE INDUSTRY GIANT

Rios would recommend Rackspace to peers, he said, on the strength of strategic collaboration: "Rackspace has been truly collaborative. They gather the technical expertise, and together we vet the project, talk about what is possible, what the best practices are, and what architecture will actually deliver the best experience."

Here is how Rios' GSD&M colleague Chris Frentz, Senior Enterprise Supervisor, views the successful interaction between the two companies:

"When I first began managing the agency's relationship with Rackspace, I had the chance to dive in with a website launch and be involved in a holistic approach, working with the sales team, the engineers and technical support. It's been a phenomenal experience, especially because if I don't know how to approach a situation, I can reach out and get that support from Rackspace."

"Working with Rackspace, I see first-hand how responsive the team is," Frentz continued. "I can call and immediately get someone on the phone. If I'm working to get something set up, the Rackspace team is behind me, already working hard and fast on it. I can rely on Rackspace."

rackspace.

Frentz said he has benefited from the GSD&M and Rackspace relationship via the planning sessions, different customer-based meetings and monthly reports that keep his team fully briefed. "To me this is Rackspace Fanatical Support®," he said.

"Any time that we're faced with delivering a solution for our clients, we look to Rackspace to be our premiere provider," said Rios. "We have a great relationship. It's one of those things where you know that you can go to sleep at night and not worry about whether that solution is going to be up and running the next morning."

ABOUT RACKSPACE

Rackspace (NYSE: RAX), the **#1 managed cloud company**, helps businesses tap the power of cloud computing without the complexity and cost of managing it on their own. Rackspace engineers deliver specialized expertise, easy-to-use tools, and **Fanatical Support**® for leading technologies developed by AWS, Google, Microsoft, OpenStack, VMware and others. The company serves customers in 120 countries, including two-thirds of the FORTUNE 100. Rackspace was named a leader in the 2015 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Cloud-Enabled Managed Hosting, and has been honored by Fortune, Forbes, and others as one of the best companies to work for.

Learn more at www.**rackspace**.com.

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