

# CASE STUDY

MANAGED HOSTING SERVICE  
RUNNING SAP HANA AND  
OTHER BUSINESS-CRITICAL  
APPS HELPS OMANI  
CONGLOMERATE MAINTAIN  
MARKET LEADERSHIP.



# KHIMJI RAMDAS PARTNERS WITH TATA COMMUNICATIONS TO POWER CLOUD-ENABLED DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION.

## BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Aiming for a digital transformation based on an upgrade to SAP HANA, along with meeting business requirements more quickly and achieving a consistent customer experience, Khimji Ramdas was facing a stark choice. Spend a fortune stripping out and rebuilding its legacy data centre, or make a bold move into the cloud?

## SOLUTION

Bold moves take courage born of confidence. The strength of the Tata Communications brand and the integrity of its Managed Hosting Service made up the senior team's minds. Twin data centres running SAP HANA offered the assurance Khimji Ramdas was seeking.

## BENEFITS

Creditably, the transition to the cloud infrastructure passed utterly unnoticed by the company's end users. They got improved performance and the benefits of mobile apps. Khimji Ramdas itself escaped a huge CapEx bill, while reducing its total cost of ownership. The IT team got increased productivity with first-class support and the ability to focus on growth and expansion plans. Winners all round.



**Significant sum**  
in avoided CapEx



**Marked drop**  
in total cost of ownership



**Twice the output**  
from same IT staffing levels



**10 out of 10**  
in key support categories

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**CHANDRA SHEKHAR JAJWARE**  
GROUP CIO, KHIMJI RAMDAS

## ABOUT KHIMJI RAMDAS

The Khimji Ramdas Group is a business conglomerate based in the Sultanate of Oman. Trusted and respected for over a century, it has achieved and maintained leadership in vertical sectors like retail, infrastructure and industrial. The Group has four diversified strategic divisions: consumer products, infrastructure, lifestyle, and projects and logistics.

For more information go to:  
[www.khimji.com](http://www.khimji.com).

## BOLD CLOUD CHOICE

With four diverse groups and over 40 business divisions, Khimji Ramdas Group depends on its IT infrastructure to keep the entire organisation acting as one. Having historically run a SAP environment the company started a digital transformation journey, including flexible mobile apps for access to backend ERP systems. But that would take a total upgrade to SAP HANA.

The problem was the SAP software had long been running on servers that were now creaking at the seams. Lacking the power and capacity required for SAP HANA, and many other business-critical apps, those servers would need wholesale replacement. That could have left Khimji Ramdas facing the huge capital cost and upheaval of a complete data centre strip-out.

Moreover, Khimji Ramdas was looking for a high availability IT infrastructure and shorter timelines to meet business requirement, while ensuring a more consistent customer experience. Chandra Shekhar Jajware, Group CIO, takes up the story: “For an IT professional, the cloud seemed the obvious alternative. The time had come to be bold.”

## MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE

In preparing senior managers for a strategic decision of such magnitude – for example, the implications of running computer systems and storing business data offsite – the IT team conducted a careful market survey to contain the risk.

“From a technical and cultural standpoint, as well as for assured security, a cloud solution from Tata Communications came out on top. Equally importantly, the strength of the brand gave us the confidence we needed to move forward,” continues Shekhar. “We also learned that Tata Communications is genuinely a solutions provider rather than a run-of-the-mill seller of infrastructure commodities, so we joined hands with them as a strategic partner.”



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## SPECIALLY ENGINEERED AND MANAGED

Tata Communications proposed a Managed Hosting Service across two data centres: one for production and the other as a DR facility. This infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) solution was specially customised for Khimji Ramdas. As an innovative two-tier virtual/physical architecture, it would use network-attached storage to ease the transition by closely matching what went before.

Another example of innovation by Tata Communications was a custom-designed IP backbone capability. A global MPLS network would have been a costly way to connect the 2,000+ users to the data centres. Instead, dual high-capacity Internet circuits were installed in both data centres and at a Khimji Ramdas point of presence. Specially engineered to always choose the shortest path, these links overcame contention and latency issues.

## CLINICAL TRANSITION INVISIBLE TO END USERS

Detailed preparatory work was crucial to delivering the project without disruption. "That investment in time was the single biggest contribution to our success," says Shekhar. "It was amazingly clinical. The system's complexity demanded detailed testing, while a lot of planning was involved to avoid downtime." Tata Communications professional services people offered strategic support and practical advice whenever challenges occurred.

In the event, the transition to the cloud and the IP backbone ran like clockwork. "Users were unaware such a massive change had occurred. We told them three weeks later, when they noticed the performance improvements and were introduced to the business and personal benefits of mobile apps," recalls Shekhar.

## FLEXIBILITY COMES WITH FINANCIAL DIVIDENDS

In terms of cost optimisation, the Tata Communications pay-as-you-go IaaS model eliminated CapEx investment. Khimji Ramdas avoided spending a significant sum, while at the same time realising a marked reduction in total cost of ownership. Meanwhile, being able to scale the infrastructure up or down makes the business more flexible in the face of economic swings.

Shekhar puts that in perspective: "To help us cope with peaks and troughs, our legacy hardware estate was over-designed and nearly double the capacity we actually needed. Now we can flex compute capacity to match our exact needs. Those changes take place in days rather than months; and we only pay for what we use."

## GUARDIAN ANGEL CHANNELS BEST PRACTICE

As a strategic reference customer, Khimji Ramdas meets the Tata Communications criteria for the services of a technical account manager (TAM). Akin to a technological guardian angel, the TAM runs improvement plans and channels best practice. Examples include monitoring CPU utilisation to head off service-affecting problems and arranging DR tests, so the business stays always-ready for unexpected emergencies.

"Such matters are discussed at monthly meetings with the TAM, where a shared slide deck keeps everything on track," says Shekhar. "The value to Khimji Ramdas is immense."

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## MANAGING THE ENTIRE IAAS STACK

The cloud service is monitored 24/7/365 from the Tata Communications managed services operations centre (MSOC) in Chennai. That covers the entire IaaS stack of virtual servers, operating systems, the network, and security aspects. The TAM, meanwhile, advises on security patches to assure cybersafety. “Since the start of the Tata Communications service, no serious cyberattacks have penetrated our security shield,” says Shekhar.

Tata Communications also configured an end-to-end proactive alert management system. Integrating the existing Khimji Ramdas trouble ticketing application with the one running in the MSOC, this automatically updates progress on both systems. That not only eliminates manual interventions but also speeds time to rectify problems.

SLAs cover availability and mean time to resolve (MTTR). Targets are set at 99.99 per cent and four business hours respectively. Meanwhile, recovery time objective (RTO) and recovery point objective (RPO) are two of the most important DR plan parameters. These are measured during regular non-disruptive DR tests.

Shekhar confirms: “Tata Communications meets and exceeds all contractual obligations.”

## REMARKABLY INVENTIVE THINKING

That level of round-the-clock support from Tata Communications is in stark contrast to the business-hours maintenance service that went before. It takes a weight off the minds of the IT team and allows them to focus on more strategic priorities. “In fact,” says Shekhar, “we’re now able to do around twice as much work with the same staffing levels as before.”

Throughout the project, Khimji Ramdas and Tata Communications people have learned much from each other, sometimes surprising SAP with the inventiveness of their thinking. Mutual regard between the teams is remarkably high.

Shekhar concludes: “I’d rate the support provided by Tata Communications as nine out of 10 across the board, and literally 10 out of 10 in some cases. Believe me, that’s unusual in our industry. The company is blessed with very many excellent people.”

## ABOUT OUR MANAGED HOSTING SERVICE

Whatever an organisation’s size, infrastructure, or growth ambitions, Tata Communications Managed Hosting Services can be tailored to meet its exact needs. Infrastructures are hosted in state-of-the-art data centres built to TIA 942 Tier-3 standards for enhanced performance and reliability. Tata Communications takes care of everything to ensure smooth, always-successful hosting. The Managed Services Operations Centre offers 24/7/365 support, while delivery and management processes adhere to ITIL service delivery guidelines.

Find out more at: <https://www.tatacommunications.com/services/cloud/infrastructure/hosting>



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