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Fujifilm's cloud-based IMAGINE platform makes customers' **special memories come alive again**



Challenge

- demand for photographic printing products down by 10%
- wanted to launch pilot project for Imagine, cloud-based printing software
- needed platform for testing and production

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Solution

- developed on Dimension Data's Managed Cloud Platform (MCP) in the US
- Imagine platform taken into production using the MCP in Johannesburg
- reliable, stable platform at a competitive price; no minimum contract term or value

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Result

- successful pilot with local partner, Q-Photo
- local MCP addresses compliance requirements and integrates with local payment gateways
- stable platform for better customer experience
- ability to quickly scale up to meet increased demand
- hourly billing means no wasted costs
- platform is the foundation for future innovation and market growth

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'The **benefits** of cloud-based computing are **numerous**. The platform is not only **secure and easy to access**, but also **scalable**.'

Wessel Visser, Director: Corporate Group, Fujifilm South Africa



Challenge

Innovation is top of the agenda

Fujifilm was established in Japan in 1934 as a manufacturer of photographic film. With the coming of the digital age and the consequent decline in film photography, the company's philosophy was to apply its skills and knowledge to new areas and markets. Today, Fujifilm continues to innovate and has diversified operations in every country, with more than 88,000 employees globally, and a significant budget for research and development.

Wessel Visser, Director: Corporate Group at Fujifilm South Africa, explains that innovation has always been at the top of the organisation's agenda. 'Over the years, Fuji has expanded into medical and industrial products, commercial printing, even skin care. Our pharmaceutical company is currently a world leader in antiretroviral technology. We're a very innovative organisation and there's always a drive to do something differently in order to do it better.'

Instant access to special memories

The company's photographic imaging division manufactures and sells a range of equipment and materials for both the commercial and consumer markets. In South Africa, demand for these products had declined by more than 10%. 'People are taking far more photos than they used to, but they're not storing them centrally or printing them anymore,' explains Visser.

'Gone are the days of the old family or school albums. Millions of photographs of special, shared experiences are now stored on hard drives or cell phones and people never look at them again. Fujifilm wanted to give our customers instant and easy access to those memories, those special moments in their lives when they shared a unique experience with friends and family. We wanted to use the latest technology to do so with the least degree of risk. Our customers should feel safe and secure, storing and accessing their photographs from wherever they were, using whichever device they choose.'

As a result, Fujifilm South Africa decided to launch the Imagine platform in the local market. The platform was aimed at not only stimulating the demand for its printing products and services, but also reach a new generation of amateur and professional photographers who have no place that's safer and more convenient to centralise their digital images.'

Imagine the future

'Imagine is an online, mobile, and in-store digital image storing, printing, and gift ordering platform built on cloud-based technology,' Visser explains. 'It allows people to retrieve their photos from various locations and store them in a central repository. From there, they can place orders for products like photobooks, canvas prints, and personalised gifts such as calendars and bags.' The platform is linked to retailers and commercial printers that print and deliver the final products.

'What makes this platform the first of its kind in the world is the fact that it's entirely cloud-based, so it doesn't rely on a particular operating system,' says Visser. 'It's integrated with all the major social media sites, and can be accessed from multiple devices – your smartphone, laptop, or a kiosk in a store.'

Fujifilm in South Africa wanted to conduct a pilot project for Imagine. 'We didn't know how big the demand would be, or when people would be loading high volumes or large images,' says Visser. 'To invest in our own infrastructure and then be able to cater for this variability, was just not an option.'

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Solution

A stable, reliable platform for the best customer experience

'The reliability, security, and stability of the platform were critical,' says Visser. 'We had to make sure that people could have secure access at any time, and upload images and process orders without interruptions caused by system downtime or concerns about the safety of their data.'

Fujifilm was looking for a partner with a proven reputation for providing reliable, secure, cloud-based solutions. 'Dimension Data stood out from other service providers in the market,' says Visser. 'The solution seemed designed just for this application. We also wanted a global partner, because Fujifilm itself is a global company that's represented on all continents. We wanted to work with a single organisation that can provide a standard for Imagine across the world and we believe Dimension Data is that partner.'

Minimal commitment, minimal risk

Fujifilm South Africa signed up for a trial period using Dimension Data's Managed Cloud Platform (MCP) in the US. The development team in Australia used the MCP to build and test the Imagine platform before taking it into production using Dimension Data's MCP in Johannesburg, South Africa. The South African platform was up and running in a matter of weeks.

'Although cost was not a primary consideration, the Dimension Data solution was very price-competitive,' says Visser. Dimension Data's MCP was the only 'pure cloud' platform that met Fujifilm's requirements, and didn't require the organisation to commit to a minimum

contract term or value. 'The benefits of cloud-based computing are numerous. The platform is not only secure and easy to access, but also scalable. Our customers could be anyone from individual consumers, to small photographic shops, to massive retailers with millions of images they need to access and work with. Cloud-based technology gives us the ability to offer that scalable, flexible service.'

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Result

Successful launch on a stable platform

Fujifilm South Africa launched its Imagine pilot with its local partner Q-Photo, a company that provides printing solutions for the high-end market of professional photographers. Fujifilm's Australian team continues to run the platform that's hosted on Dimension Data's MCP in Johannesburg.

'The location helps us to address some compliance requirements relating to data sovereignty, integrate with local payment gateways, and deliver a better customer experience,' says Visser. '

Thanks to automation, Fujifilm's engineers can log on to Dimension Data's self-service portal and provision servers as needed, and take them down just as quickly. The organisation is billed hourly, which minimises wasted costs. 'We don't have to procure hardware to do this, or even wait for additional servers to be provisioned,' says Visser. 'The flexibility of the solution is fantastic. We also don't charge our customers storage costs because of the very reasonable cloud-based storage rates we're currently paying ourselves.'

A platform for future innovation

The success of the Q-Photo pilot has laid the foundation for launching Imagine into the general market, for example, through loyalty programmes and employee benefit programmes. There's also the possibility of using the software's recognition features to generate big data for personal marketing. And, as the MCP also allows Fujifilm to quickly and easily scale up to grow storage capacity, the company can look at offering longer-term storage solutions for customers wishing to store photos in the cloud. Fujifilm South Africa has firmly established a platform for future innovation and market growth.

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Services overview

- Managed Cloud Platform (MCP)
- automated provisioning
- self-service

