

City Furniture, Inc.

Finding shelter from the storm with Kyndryl

Founded in the 1970s, **City Furniture** is one of Florida's leading home Furniture furnishings retailers. With offerings for every taste, lifestyle and budget, the City Furniture tag line promises customers that "Everyone Can Live Like This." Based in Tamarac, Florida, City Furniture has 1,800 associates and operates 29 retail locations, two distribution centers and an e-commerce site. A green-conscious business, City Furniture runs delivery trucks on compressed natural gas, recycles millions of pounds of waste every year and earned top scores from the Sustainable Furnishings Council in 2018.

Business challenge

With its stores located in hurricane-prone South Florida, City Furniture, Inc. needed a proven solution to keep its business-critical computer operations up and running without hurricane related disruptions. In addition, the retailer needed a scalable managed cloud option for its mission-critical x86 environment.

Transformation

By migrating to cloud, City Furniture ensured that business-critical computer operations and essential customer data would be protected against hurricane-related disruptions. It also added the capability to scale up computing capacity according to demand and create a platform for adding cloud-based applications and cognitive capabilities.

Results

Supports business growth with the latest collaboration from a 40-year partnership with Kyndryl™, formerly IBM Infrastructure Services

Delivers scalable computing power on demand to ramp up capacity during peak periods

Provides around-the-clock support with network monitoring and backups at multiple IBM Cloud locations

"Every minute matters, and if our systems are not online then we're letting our customers down. Moving to the cloud lets us sleep better at night."

Chad Simpson

Senior Vice President of Technology,
City Furniture



Storm warning

The wind howls at 150 miles per hour. Walls of water toss cars like beach toys. Millions of homes and businesses plunge into darkness. Nothing in nature delivers the atmospheric energy of a hurricane or the destructive potential of these cyclonic scourges.

Jutting into the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico with 1,350 miles of coastline, no other location in the US gets hit more often by hurricanes than the Florida peninsula. Since 1851, over 100 hurricanes have made landfall between Key West and Pensacola. During coming years, hurricanes could also become more devastating as the climate changes and sea levels rise.

In the aftermath of a series of hurricane-related outages and near-misses, City Furniture could no longer tolerate the risks that hurricanes posed to its South Florida business locations. As one of Florida's largest retailers, City Furniture ran its own on-premises computing systems and stored vital customer data at local data centers. The IT management team was looking for a proven solution to back up critical data and support network resiliency, regardless of any weather threat.

At the same time, City Furniture recognized another opportunity. What if moving to a new, more reliable computing platform could also add more operational flexibility, with the capacity to handle greater workloads during sales events and seasonal surges?

"[Kyndryl, formerly IBM Infrastructure Services] has been a partner of ours for over 40 years, so we couldn't think of a better partner that we'd like to go on the journey to cloud with," explains Chad Simpson, Senior Vice President of Technology at City Furniture. "They understand enterprise, they understand business-critical and we knew they would do whatever it took to make it a success."

Move to higher ground

City Furniture used cloud migration services from Kyndryl to migrate to IBM Cloud® to support network reliability and resiliency. The move also created a more agile platform for cloud-based apps and cognitive computing to deliver better customer service.

Working with Kyndryl, City Furniture moved its hybrid legacy system operations to the cloud. By physically moving its servers out of potential hurricane impact zones, City Furniture ensured that its computing infrastructure would have the resiliency to continue serving the business. This new level of resiliency included enhanced data protection, mitigated information risk and ensured access to critical information with cloud backup services.

After moving its database to the cloud, City Furniture realized additional synergies by working with Kyndryl to create cloud-based apps for its retail environment.

"Now that we've moved our business-critical data and servers into four different data centers geographically separated across the United States, our team can focus on innovation versus taking care of maintenance or hardware," says Simpson. "That's really where we want to focus more of our time and effort to innovate across the enterprise."

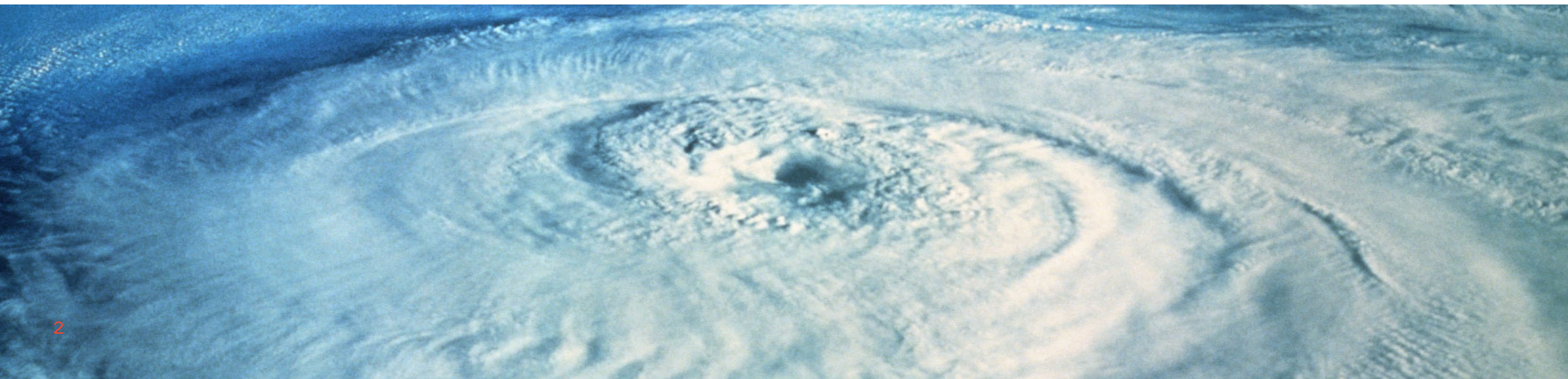
Ready for the next wave of innovation

Now that City Furniture has completed its migration to IBM Cloud, it experiences the peace of mind that comes with diversifying network assets at multiple locations beyond Florida's hurricane impact zone. Kyndryl has single-point responsibility for cloud computing operations, which includes high availability disaster recovery (HADR) and around-the-clock system monitoring.

Cloud computing has also yielded other business benefits. Depending on workloads, the system has the ability to scale up or down so City Furniture only pays for the computing capacity it needs.

With its operational and customer data migrated to the cloud, City Furniture is starting several new projects to better apply this information, including deploying data and analytics, which will include AI capabilities to better serve its customers.

"Our president says that we are no longer a furniture company. We're a technology company that sells furniture," summarizes Chad Simpson. "The only way you do that is to continuously innovate and leverage technology such as cloud, cognitive, data and analytics. We're continuously pushing the needle and trying to gain a competitive edge however we can."





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Take the next step

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