

Gilt Groupe

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brocade transforms data center networking with open, virtual, and automated solutions that empower organizations to maximize their investments for the New IP

Challenges

- Eliminate downtime and slow website performance during peak traffic periods
- Transition to a cloud environment for flexibility and scalability, and to reduce costs

Solutions

- Brocade Virtual Traffic Manager
- Brocade Virtual Web Application Firewall
- Runs on common off the shelf servers based on Intel's x86 architectures

Benefits

- 50 percent reduction in back-end servers, which resulted in significant cost savings
- Increased traffic due to improved customer satisfaction
- Real-time traffic views and tracking make it easy to strategize and plan

Brocade Helps Triple Gilt Groupe's Web Traffic Within a Year

With millions of unique visitors to its website and over 5,000 requests per second during peak periods, online retailer Gilt Groupe could lose a large percentage of its daily profits in just 10 minutes of downtime. Looking to ensure a consistently excellent customer experience, increase revenue, and decrease back-end costs, Gilt Groupe made the move to virtualization with Brocade as their traffic management solution.

Gilt Groupe was looking for the best way to grow fast, and quickly decided that moving to a cloud environment would provide the flexibility, scalability, and speed of deployment they needed.

With Gilt Groupe already using Brocade in the physical environment, they realized that the software-based Brocade® Virtual Traffic Manager would be able to move seamlessly with them into the cloud platform they had chosen.

Phong Nguyen, VP Research & Development and Founder at Gilt Groupe, explains, "A virtualized Brocade solution made a lot of sense—we could set up additional servers in minutes and also run more redundancy across a larger number of physical servers."

Brocade Makes Moving into the Cloud Simple

Gilt Groupe faced several challenges in moving their architecture into a cloud

environment, but the Brocade Virtual Traffic Manager was not one of them. "With all the complexity of moving from a hosted environment to a full cloud environment, we were pleasantly surprised to see just how simple the Brocade components were to operate. Everything worked well, from details like SSL Certificates to preventing fault tolerance in the cluster."

Brocade in the Cloud

Using the Brocade subscription model enabled Gilt Groupe to roll out a larger number of Brocade servers. Nguyen continued, "We implemented a multi-tier, service-oriented architecture, with multiple independent clusters all managed from Brocade. This allows us to manage all aspects of the infrastructure with a common, reliable load balancer and content cache."

WHY BROCADE

"Brocade is phenomenal in terms of the number of page requests it can serve per second. On the West Coast, where we currently operate a small cluster of three Brocade Virtual Traffic Managers, we can deliver over 100,000 requests per second. Brocade helps us prepare for larger traffic spikes as our business grows."

"Our traffic skyrockets at noon every day, so without Brocade we'd have to implement things differently. While the server pools decreased, we saw our traffic triple within the year."

– Phong Nguyen, VP research & development and founder, Gilt Groupe

"We have a service-oriented architecture, in which the data sources are split into various different pools. We use Brocade to do all the routing and in some cases manage the authentication to the services."

A Hybrid Model for Customer Security

To be Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)-compliant, Gilt Groupe continued using two of their Brocade servers in a data center environment, deploying Brocade Virtual Web Application Firewall module to handle all payment and credit card requests. Nguyen added, "With Brocade, we were able to lock down sensitive data and satisfy PCI DSS compliance."

Content Caching Makes All the Difference

Specialized caching with Brocade solutions decreases the latency and increases the speed, performance, and overall user experience of Gilt Groupe's website. Cached content is placed as close to the user as possible, reducing trips to the back-end servers to retrieve data. In California, for example, customers are seeing improved page load times because much of the dynamic content can now be served from a cloud closer to those customers.

"Brocade is phenomenal in terms of the number of page requests it can serve

per second," Nguyen adds. "On the West Coast, where we currently operate a small cluster of three Brocade Virtual Traffic Managers, we can deliver over 100,000 requests per second. Brocade helps us prepare for larger traffic spikes as our business grows."

50 Percent Reduction in Back-end Servers

Gilt Groupe saw an immediate cost reduction because it was able to decommission servers as soon as they started using Brocade in the cloud.

Over the year, a combination of the Brocade content caching and the service-orientated architecture has reduced the back-end server requirement by 50 percent.

Nguyen concludes, "Our traffic skyrockets at noon every day, so without Brocade we'd have to implement things differently. While the server pools decreased, we saw our traffic triple within the year.

"With the pages loading so much faster, we started seeing even more traffic. And the graphs in Brocade's user interface allow us to see all traffic in real-time and track the increases, which helps us plan for future provisioning. Brocade is an integral part of our architecture and an extension of our application."

About Gilt Groupe

Gilt Groupe provides access, by invitation only, to Men's, Women's and Children's coveted fashion and luxury brands at prices up to 70 percent off retail. Each sale lasts 36 hours and features hand selected styles from a single designer. From Valentino to Tibi and John Varvatos, Gilt Groupe offers a selection of merchandise at a range of prices, only on www.gilt.com.

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