

Global leader in managed analytics-Ugam-boosts productivity and cuts operational costs for greater business returns with Rackspace

As the saying goes, knowledge is power. And few businesses understand that better than managed analytics firm [Ugam](#).

A global leader in managed analytics, Ugam has turned the task of unlocking insight trapped within business data into a technology-backed art form, enabling customers to make multi-million dollar decisions quickly and with confidence.

For example, Ugam collects hundreds of data points for millions of product SKUs sold by retailers around the world and assimilates that data with transactional and third-party data as well as e-demand signals like product searches, traffic, reviews, ratings and likes. Ugam then analyzes this data to provide retailers with the information they need to make informed pricing, assortment, promotion and content intelligence decisions.

Ugam's services for retailers include Pricing Intelligence & Optimization, Assortment Intelligence and Product Content Solutions, but the company also uses the same proprietary platform to deliver its Brand Intelligence solution, which helps individual brands monitor and enforce minimum advertised price (MAP) policies. In addition to its retail and brand offerings, Ugam provides process- and technology-led research operations solutions for market research firms.

"Ugam is fundamentally an analytics company. Our main market segments are retailers, online marketplaces and brands, and we provide analytics around the retail landscape in three major areas," said Sridhar Sharma, Chief Technology Officer for Ugam. "First, there is analysis of what products retailers should carry, second there is insight into prices and real time optimization for maximizing margins and third, we offer strategic recommendations for content optimization – how companies should describe their products on web sites."

Ugam's managed analytics formula has been a success. Today, nine of the world's 25 largest retailers, many of the biggest global brands and online marketplaces, and about half of the 25 top market research organizations rely on Ugam to help improve their businesses.

The need for power, performance and speed

Every business faces computing challenges, but few face so many simultaneously. Ugam's unique offering creates a triple-whammy when it comes to server performance. It demands the power to handle complex computations, huge transaction volumes, and perhaps most importantly for Ugam's customers, its solution must be blazingly fast, capable of quickly delivering the market intelligence needed to back mission-critical business decisions. There are also

significant workload peaks as seasonal shopping seasons come and go. This uneven workload pattern presents Ugam with a classic IT dilemma:

To deliver the quality that its customers demand, Ugam needed a technology partner that offered performance and flexibility that made commercial sense. That's precisely what made Rackspace and its flagship Cloud server such a compelling choice.

"Ideally, we wanted a solution that allowed us to provision services as and when needed to handle seasonal shifts in data volume and thereby optimize on budget and management resources," said Sharma.

"Our strategy was to look at cloud-based data structure providers. That's where Rackspace came in, handling a volatile mix of business challenges created by complex workloads and seasonal spikes, while at the same time managing costs. It's been working extremely well for the last five years," he added.

Fanatical Support performs above and beyond Ugam's expectations

Rackspace focuses on the managed support needs of their customers. With the recent managed cloud offering, they provide customers with the power of cloud computing without the pain and expense of managing it themselves.

With Rackspace, Ugam enjoys a very stable network and hosting environment, as well as rapid service response and problem solving skills.

Rackspace's famous Fanatical Support team proactively monitors Ugam's infrastructure and keeps them informed about the health of all mission-critical nodes.

"They continually go above and beyond what we expect and keep us apprised of infrastructure thresholds that are showing strains and could possibly disrupt our systems, eliminating any negative issues that could impact our customers," Sharma.

While Ugam's workload volume may change throughout the year, the need for rapid response times do not.

"Since we switched to Rackspace's dedicated hosting and cloud computing services, we have seen a phenomenal improvement in both operational performance and the all-important cost-per-calculation ratio that drives our business," said Sharma.

"In real-world terms, that has supported an increase in workload processing by almost 20%. Even better, Rackspace has at the same time enabled Ugam to cut

the cost of carrying out that work by an impressive 40% – allowing us to enjoy a healthy margin in an extremely dynamic and competitive market,” he said.

Uptime guarantee – the final piece of the puzzle

Given the real-time nature of Ugam’s services, system reliability was an extremely important factor in deciding which supplier to select.

“Unexpected downtime is detrimental to our business, damages our brand image and destroys customer loyalty. Our customers rely on the special kind of instant insight that we deliver. Rackspace enables us to keep delivering that, day-in and day-out without fear of interruption. They provide performance as well as peace of mind,” said Sharma.

In addition to uptime guarantees, Rackspace’s dedicated infrastructure also provides another benefit. It enables Ugam to easily accommodate seasonal spikes in workload, without compromising performance or spending a fortune on capacity that lies unused most of the time.

“With the ability to innovate and operate continuously, and of course, its Fanatical Support, Rackspace helps us succeed with rapid scale-ups and scale-downs,” Sharma added.

AT-A-GLANCE

COMPANY: Ugam

INDUSTRY: Retail and brand analytics

WHAT THEY DO: Ugam is a managed analytics company that helps brands, marketplaces and retailers improve category performance with analytics solutions for assortment, pricing and product content. They blend a proprietary big data platform with domain expertise, delivering superior customer experience and specific results to nine of the 25 largest U.S. Internet retailers and many of the world’s leading brands and online marketplaces.

IT GOALS: To find a solution to server performance challenges – the power to handle complex computations, the bandwidth to manage large volumes of data and the speed to satisfy the decision-making appetites of its global customer base.

SOLUTION: Ugam chose Rackspace’s Cloud server offering to handle a volatile mix of business challenges created by complex workloads and seasonal workload spikes, while at the same time managing costs.

Business Outcome: The five-year partnership with Rackspace has enabled Ugam to effortlessly balance seasonal workload spikes, increase productivity by 20% and cut costs by 40%.