



Modern Oracle converged platform underpins Screenvision Media's content delivery to movie theaters nationwide

Key points

- 1 Evolved from a complex multi-vendor architecture to converged Oracle Database Appliance platform
- 2 New platform transforms performance and supports confident business growth
- 3 Ongoing proactive 24x7 global Managed Services enables Screenvision to focus on its core business

Movie theater advertising giant relies on Cintra to architect, implement and manage the modern, converged Oracle platform at the center of its next-generation technology operations.



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Mike Henry, SVP Information Technology, Screenvision

Introduction

Every time you go to the movies, you see a variety of adverts before the main feature. The ads you see are targeted based on your location, the film you're about to watch and other factors, all designed to ensure they're relevant to the audience.

Screenvision Media is one of the companies responsible for making this happen. Working with more than 2,300 movie theaters and 150 circuit partners across the USA, it helps connect local businesses and national brands with potential customers via the movie screen.

Managing targeted advertising for 14,000 movie screens

Keeping track of which adverts should play on which screen and when is the bedrock of Screenvision's business. It's a big task: with 14,000 screens, most of them with multiple showings per day, there are a lot of advertising schedules to plan and distribute, plus the associated finances to track and allocate.

Today, all of this is done by a customized version of an application called Integrated Broadcast Management System (IBMS). Screenvision started using this in early 2011, to bring together the capabilities of previously separate systems and thereby streamline its operations.

Mike Henry, SVP Information Technology at Screenvision explains how important IBMS has become: "The application and the platform it runs on are how we run our business. It covers inventory forecasting, campaign management, creative allocations to campaigns and all trafficking.

"It enables us to push out advertising schedules as frequently as we like, meaning we can change campaigns around based on performance and offer our advertising partners the flexibility they want.

"IBMS also tracks the financials associated with campaigns, so we can determine what we owe our exhibitor partners, and what our advertising partners owe us. Without IBMS, it would be difficult for us to function."

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Early platform blueprinted design

IBMS relies on an Oracle database, and since this was Screenvision's first major use of Oracle, it brought in Oracle architecture specialists Cintra in 2011 to validate the platform designs its in-house IT team had put together. These were based on traditional commodity hardware. Cintra reviewed the designs and aligned them to its blueprints, making enhancements to provide clustered high-availability for higher service levels, without incurring any additional software license costs.

Proactive Managed Services since 2011

Following the successful deployment of IBMS, Screenvision engaged Cintra's 24x7 global Oracle Managed Services Center of Excellence to maintain and monitor the Oracle environment on an ongoing 24x7 basis.

Cintra's remit was to work as an extension of Screenvision's in-house technology team, with full responsibility for its Oracle estate. Cintra advises senior stakeholders at Screenvision and works directly with the application vendor on behalf of the business, when required.

Cintra has worked with Screenvision continually since 2011, providing 24x7 real-time monitoring and regular proactive maintenance and patching on the Oracle environment.

Henry explains how the relationship works: "I view the Cintra team as our internal resources. It's critical we can lean on them and I've come to take for granted that they are always available and ready to support me 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Screenvision is based in New York and our application vendor has teams in Europe and the Middle East, so we're working on different schedules and timezones. But because Cintra has resources all around the world, this provides us with the 24-hour coverage we need, meaning that when things pop up, they are attended to quickly and

resolved in a timely manner so as not to impact the business and our reputation in our very public-facing market."

Architecture modernization with an Oracle-on-Oracle strategy

With the success and growth of the business, Screenvision started to outgrow the platform. Henry takes up the story: "As we got a couple of years into using IBMS, we could see we were starting to hit the capacity of our traditional platform. We discussed our options with Cintra, and they brought the engineered system, the Oracle Database Appliance (ODA) to our attention. Cintra provided a detailed design and roadmap to the new platform, which gave us the confidence to select and migrate to the new modern ODA platform."

Cintra provided a complete solution-based procurement package for the ODA architecture, including hardware and fixed-cost services. Screenvision proceeded with the purchase of the ODA solution. Cintra implemented the new architecture in weeks across two data centers and provided a minimal downtime migration to the new platform.

Growth without major licensing spend

Moving to the new platform provided Screenvision with much-needed room for growth, without the need for additional software licensing outlays. Henry explains: "What was nice was that despite having the extra capacity, our licensing footprint remained pretty much constant: the only thing we had to buy was Real Application Clusters (RAC) One Node licenses. If we'd gone down the route of adding to our previous platform, we'd have had to purchase more Oracle licenses."

This wasn't the only benefit: Screenvision Media noticed an immediate improvement in performance, particularly of its many I/O intensive batch and reporting processes.

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Oracle license audit

Cintra's Oracle licensing expertise was called into action again in 2014, when Screenvision was audited by Oracle. Cintra's team provided the necessary architectural information and ran the required scripts to demonstrate that Screenvision was compliant.

Upgrading to the ODA X5-2

As Screenvision's business continued to grow, so did the Oracle database underpinning IBMS. And by mid-2016, this was putting increased pressure on the underlying ODA platform, both in terms of capacity and performance.

Working with Cintra, Screenvision assessed its options, including Oracle's high-end Exadata Database Machine.

However, having reviewed the requirements and growth forecasts, Cintra and Screenvision decided that the new Oracle Database Appliance X5 models were the most suitable fit.

As it had done with the previous ODAs, Cintra took full responsibility for the migration to the ODA X5 platform. This was successfully launched in September 2016.

Henry says: "The new ODA X5-2 appliances give us better processing and introduce more flash storage, which should really help us on some of our back-office processing as well.

"We run a huge number of batch processes, an example being when we amend the forecasts for our inventory. When you make that change, it has to be laid out across every campaign in the system and revenue needs to be reshuffled and reallocated. It's very resource-intensive, and the upgrade to the ODA X5 should speed these processes up and limit the waits we were starting to experience.

"Overall, the ODA X5 has a lot more capacity, so a year down the road, we're not going to be having to upgrade again."

Cintra: Screenvision's trusted Oracle partner

Henry concludes by summarizing why Screenvision values its partnership with Cintra so highly: "What has been great is that while I know Cintra needs to make money, right from the beginning, I've always felt that their recommendations come with our best interests at heart. I wouldn't say that about some of the other vendors we've worked with. Cintra's approach really builds a level of trust.

"We don't have to worry about the standard, ongoing maintenance – it just happens. And if issues do pop up, the team at Cintra is always quick to jump in and help. Importantly for me, I get the feeling that if one individual hits something that's at the stretch of their knowledge, they don't burn time learning about it: they quickly escalate it, which saves us time and money.

"The application that relies on this Oracle platform is what runs our business. And yet because of the success of our relationship with Cintra, we've never considered hiring our own Oracle database administrator (DBA) to look after it.

"By working with Cintra, we get to tap into a team of resources, all with valuable in-depth skills and experiences. Our relationship with Cintra allows us to get on with our business without the traditional IT distractions. I truly believe in Cintra's mission statement, which is that they have been focused on one thing during our six-year partnership, that mission being to "Architect our success"."

To find out more about Cintra and how we can help you:



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