iOCO

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CUSTOMER
iOCO Cloud

Headquartered in South Africa, iOCO Cloud delivers hosted cloud services to customers across seven data centers across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the UK. Its any cloud-as-a-service offerings provide the elasticity needed for a client to scale into a hybrid and multi-cloud world.

Industry
Technology

Strategic priorities
• Multi-Cloud

VMware footprint
• VMware vCloud Verified

• VMware vCenter

• VMware ESXi

• VMware NSX-T

• VMware vCloud Director

• VMware vSAN

• VMware vRealize Operations

• VMware vCloud Usage Meter

• CloudHealth Partner Platform

iOCO Cloud leverages VMware to build its any cloud-as-a-service offering

iOCO Cloud offers cloud services to customers through its hosted cloud services built on VMware technologies. Services that today allow customers to build a multi-and hybrid cloud environment, and with the help of the interoperability with VMware, enable easy alignment to the hyperscalers with whom iOCO has strategic partnerships, in particular AWS. Through its journey to offering hosted cloud services, iOCO has partnered with interconnectivity partner Teraco Data Environments, specifically leveraging its Africa Cloud Exchange. This along with its status as a VMware Cloud Provider Partner (VCPP) has enabled the company to focus on creating, developing, and designing its "any cloud-as-a-service" offerings for a global customer base.

Cloud as a core competency

iOCO is the Information Communications Technology (ICT) services arm of the EOH Group. Headquartered in South Africa, the company has an established presence throughout Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the United Kingdom and as a turn-key ICT business delivers solutions across the ICT spectrum including software and development to managed services, data and analytics, automation, quality assurance and testing, advisory, security and naturally cloud, to name a few. The multi-faceted iOCO Cloud business has been around for over a decade, offering consulting and strategic guidance for cloud development, roadmaps, and infrastructure services across its seven global datacenters, and in Africa extending into Teraco Data Environments. Additionally, the cloud team provides specialist skills in designing, implementing, and managing on-premises, private, public, and multi-cloud environments.

"To build our cloud business, we knew we needed to partner with other players who were further along in their cloud journey, which is where our conversations with Teraco and VMware started."

Paul Spagnoletti, Business Unit Executive: Cloud and Security South Africa

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No stranger to cloud

Cloud services are an essential part of the iOCO DNA, and over the past ten years, the company has undertaken a fluid approach to building, adapting, and delivering cloud solutions and services for clients looking to move their business workloads in full, or in part, into the cloud.

Its vision from the start was not to take a client's infrastructure, host it offsite and call it a cloud where it is just a co-hosted offsite datacenter. Instead, iOCO set out to develop a multi-cloud, multi-tenant environment that it could manage for its clients or offer clients self-service capabilities.

"We were exceptionally early to the cloud race; there were service providers offering hosted cloud space, and there were no public cloud providers in the market," said Paul Spagnoletti, Business Unit Executive: Cloud and Security South Africa.

While being early to market may have had challenges, it has been the perfect catalyst for the company to adapt and change its model over time.

Building a global cloud framework

While the journey dates back 10 years, it has constantly evolved. Today iOCO is leveraging VMware to support its infrastructure business which caters to clients in a one-speed world or legacy world. And secondly, to offer hosted solutions to those customers in the two-speed world who are digitally transforming and embracing the cloud.

The company attributes a large part of achieving this to its status as a VMware Cloud Provider Partner (VCPP). This allows it to offer clients access to subscription-based VMware licensing to build their own VMware environments and move away from a CAPEX model towards an OPEX-based solution.

According to Spagnoletti, the iOCO cloud platform runs the VMware vSphere stack, including vCenter and ESXi. And its Cloud 3.0, or hosted cloud platform, draws from its VCPP partner status and has been built using the full VMware vCloud Verified stack, namely vCenter, ESXi, NSX-T, vCloud Director, vSAN, vRealize Operations, and its Cloud Usage meter.

> "VMware is a major part of our hosted cloud platform; they are front and center of this and a massive part of our technical landscape. Their ongoing investment into their offerings and solutions like CloudHealth Partner Platform help us enhance and continually adapt our services to our customers."
>
> Paul Spagnoletti, Business Unit Executive: Cloud and Security South Africa

The partnership with Teraco has been key as it is an onramp for many Hyperscalers. And from an interconnect perspective, being hosted in the Teraco datacenter enables fluid engagement between private and public clouds.

"In the simplest way, Teraco offers space, power, cooling, and interconnectivity through the Africa Cloud Exchange. Most can offer space and power, but what cannot be replicated is what is Teraco 'secret sauce': the security and performance of the interconnectivity we provide with on-ramps to one or multiple clouds. Now with the proliferation of the hyperscalers and the demand on partners like iOCO to deliver hosted cloud services, we offer the platform that helps with the interconnection between this all," said Di Buijs, Strategic Partnerships, Teraco Data Environments.

A hybrid success

"Our partnership with VMware and our use of its solutions to develop our cloud platform gives our clients a single pane of glass visibility into their cloud. There is huge value in letting customers move into the cloud carefully, cautiously, and without massive risk. Which is what creating and building out their cloud environments with the VMware vCloud Verified stack enables us to do," said Spagnoletti.

The success of the iOCO cloud platform is that it is not a traditional outsourced datacenter service where it is just hosting an organization's kit in the Teraco datacenter on a VMware fabric and managing it for them. It is 100 percent hosted cloud offering where it owns the infrastructure and offers the cloud as a service.

"Today, we have a multi-tenant cloud platform which a client can self-provision and auto-scale as required," added Spagnoletti.

It is the perfect environment for clients to get a feel for the cloud, an environment where they can learn how to adapt to what they expect of the cloud as their journey progresses. A customer can auto-scale and auto-provision within the iOCO hosted cloud to add hyperscalers offerings with the iOCO CloudBolt cloud management platform.

"The way we articulate our role and the benefits we add to the mix is that we partner with cloud providers like iOCO to offer a connectivity ecosystem via all the networks that land at Teraco. Plus, an onramp to every hyperscaler, be it AWS, Microsoft or Oracle. This opens opportunities for end-users to optimize their journey to digital transformation and area

our VMware Cloud Provider Partners, like iOCO, are good at capitalizing on," says Buijs.

"Our platform has an uptime of 99.99999 percent and has not gone down in ten years, and that is a credit to the partners that we have, namely Teraco and VMware. But it is not just technology, its relationships that matter, and being able to work together is central to our success."

Paul Spagnoletti, Business Unit Executive: Cloud and Security South Africa

Looking ahead

"Looking ahead, we are building a model where we can provide our customers with everything as a service. iOCO is looking to be agile and independent enough to provide and service any customer on any journey, regardless of their cloud or technology. In short, we want to be the journey partner that can merge the one-speed and two-speed worlds our customers are in. And deliver solutions that allow them to take the next step and capitalize on opportunities in the market through the technologies and services we provide," says Spagnoletti.

It is a vision shared by its partners VMware and Teraco Data Environments.

"We 100 percent focused on facilities, keeping the lights on, and making sure everyone is interconnected to each other. And that is where we will remain because that has been our success. We want to see customers like iOCO succeed and interconnect with as many enterprises as possible because that drives our success. It is a symbiotic relationship," says Michele McCann, Head of Interconnection and Peering, Teraco Data Environments.

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