

Sridhar Mullapudi:

If Covid happened 20 years ago we all probably would've been screwed because, you know, there was not a lot of tech stack to actually help us collaborate. Citrix always talked about this notion of work is not a place, work is what you do. And we believe providing those tool sets and infrastructure so people can work from anywhere.

Jason Lopez:

Sridhar Mullapudi is the general manager of Citrix's Citrix Business Unit, which operates under the newly formed company, the Cloud Software Group. This is the Tech Barometer podcast. I'm Jason Lopez. We chatted with him about what goes on behind the scenes to empower people to work from anywhere. Citrix and Nutanix have worked together to expand the capabilities of enterprise computing. If you're a Nutanix customer and you use Citrix, you can do something you couldn't do before. Take what you run from your private data center, replicate it and run it from Azure or AWS in a public cloud. It can manage this stuff in the backend. They can more easily move data and do it securely and remotely.

Sridhar Mullapudi:

We've done the initial work of understanding the stack really well and creating those abstractions and other stuff. And Nutanix does a great job abstracting that across multi-cloud and there's always nuances in understanding how the Nutanix clusters on Azure works so it can be validated and be tested. But it's been a great standing partnership and a platform that we understand well, they understand as well and so it's much easier to keep building it.

Jason Lopez:

And the NC two cluster that runs on Azure, is that, is that like a natural progression since the partnership started, what, a decade ago or so?

Sridhar Mullapudi:

It is. It is. I mean, when we really started, if you think of the evolution of the partnership, it was kind of Nutanix hyperconverged software running on V sphere. So that was the first thing we supported. Later when Nutanix evolved to KVM and or HV as we call it, you know, we were the first to partner with that complete Nutanix stack all the way from software to hypervisor and then Xi I think at that time, the first kind of cloud version of it, we were the first to kind of support it. And so this is really a natural extension which makes it really easy for us to kind of work and and collaborate.

Jason Lopez:

Yeah, and I imagine, you know, we often hear that these kinds of collaborations are driven by customer needs, you know, the opportunities that arise from working with customers. What's the story there?

Sridhar Mullapudi:

When Nutanix really started, they were the pioneers in the hyperconverged infrastructure, right? How do we bring compute storage, all networking, everything all across, start small and kind of expand without expensive storage? So one of the first workloads they looked at and said, what's the best workload, right? For, for any new platform? It's like you need a killer app. And VDI turned out to be a killer app for hyperconverged infrastructure. So our customers are also were looking at scaling VDI and they didn't want to pay the V Tax or you know, the whole high expensive storage networks and

everything else. So I think the Citrix Nutanix stack and partnership was so critical for them to actually scale VDI and make it more efficient, you know, cheaper to operate in a long way and that's always good for the customers. So this is a longstanding relationship between Nutanix and Citrix. So not just technology and integrations, but also relationships.

Jason Lopez:

Can you take us back a bit to virtual desktop infrastructure, you know, that being the bread and butter app for many Citrix customers. How has that evolved?

Sridhar Mullapudi:

You know, I would say over the past few years the industry as it's been transforming more into cloud and as a service VDI has been transformed more like Daas, desktop as a service, the core of what it does is still the same. Where you want to be able to securely connect your desktops and applications wherever they're sitting: private cloud, public cloud hybrid where you're not managing all the infrastructure yourself. It can be offered as a SaaS service. So that's been the evolution. While the core, what it does, what value it does has not changed, but the flexibility, the manageability, the cost of it have all greatly improved.

Jason Lopez:

Well, on this as a service theme, it seems like, you know, there's a big demand for hybrid multi-cloud. And in the sense of, uh, cloud as a service, but wanting the tools to achieve that scale of hybrid multi-cloud, is that a trend that you're also seeing?

Sridhar Mullapudi:

Yeah, we've, we've started seeing this trend, I would say seven, eight years since AWS started. But what happened was the pandemic happened so suddenly everybody had to work from home and there was just not enough time or capacity for them to build this infrastructure by themselves or hire people or buy hardware, anything else. So they're like, "Hey look, I want to tap into cloud for flexibility and other stuff." So now customers are like, "look, I never want to be in that situation." So now they're investing in infrastructure, they want to have hybrid market by cloud. I think some of the recent trends where customers are saying like, "I also want to use my spend on cloud just because the market conditions are changing, the economic times are changing." So I think we'll come back to an equilibrium where they want that flexibility. "Hey, for certain use cases and workloads, I want to put it in my data centers or private clouds. I think that's most, and some I want to use public and I want that flexibility back and forth." I think now there's a little bit normalization and people understand, but I don't want to get locked into any single cloud. I want to have that flexibility. So now they're coming to their partners like Citrix and Nutanix as well to say like, "Hey, how do you provide that hybrid multi-cloud solution? Give optionality, don't lock me into a single cloud provider and have that flexibility and choice." So customers want that choice more.

Jason Lopez:

Right. And so choice, on that idea of having options if they're running in the public cloud, are you seeing them move from one public cloud to the next?

Sridhar Mullapudi:

Yeah, I think a few things are happening there. One, if they're a pure data center, kind of a private cloud type of a customer doing it themselves and their data centers or maybe cos their strengths where like, "look, I don't want to be in the data center business and I want to use uh, somebody else data center, public cloud, kind of a data center." So that trend has been going on for a while. I think second, they also understand the power of these clouds and relationships they have whether it's, you know, Azure or Google Cloud or AWS or others and they don't want to get locked in. The move away from a data center I think is driving the hybrid discussion. The move to adopt multiple clouds for flexibility, best breed solutions, is driving a multi-cloud discussion. And I think that's creating opportunities for vendors like Citrix and Nutanix because they look at it and say, "Hey look, I don't want to triple my operational complexity if I have one here, another cloud and others. So like I would rather have that flexibility without paying the cost." So that's where they look at hybrid multi-cloud vendors and how they can help.

Jason Lopez:

Well, just one more question and this one looking to the future. On that idea of being able to work from anywhere, you know, where we started our discussion, what are the challenges that still remain in your estimation?

Sridhar Mullanpudi:

If there was one thing the pandemic kind of showed us that I think we made, you know, quite a big progress in technology evolution, whether it's bandwidth service, availability device and everything else. For us to actually collaborate sometimes jokingly say "if covid happened 20 years ago, we all probably would've been screwed because, you know, there was not a lot of tech stack to actually help us collaborate." Citrix always talked about this notion of work is not a place, work is what you do. And we believe providing those tool sets and infrastructure so people can work from anywhere, right? I mean, you know, we pioneered the delivery of, you know, applications way back in the day we did Go to Meeting, I mean now we have Zoom, you know, and a bunch of other tools as well. So we always believed in that model. I think both in terms of infrastructure, whether it's device or network or applications and everything else. Now we are a little bit more hybrid. I do believe innovation drives growth and value and sometimes you've got to figure out how to bring people together and, and so I think hybrid becomes very important. What does that hybrid experience look like, right? I think past two years we are all remote. If you're all remote, I think you all feel like equal when you're in the office, when you're remote, you know, you might feel collaboration is challenging. So I think there's some both technical hurdles there, probably social, personal and those kind of things as well. So I'm sure there's the next 10 years of innovation ahead of us to really make the hybrid work like you are in person.

Jason Lopez:

Sridhar Mullanpudi is the general manager of the Citrix Business Unit in the Cloud Software Group. He's been with Citrix since 2001. This is the Tech Barometer podcast. I'm Jason Lopez. Tech Barometer is produced by the Forecast, a publication of Nutanix. Check us out for other stories on technology and the people in tech at [theforecastbynutanix.com](http://theforecastbynutanix.com).