Brett Tanzer

The infrastructure that Azure provides, really makes it possible for customers to reach new levels of TCO using their Nutanix solutions. You get to take your existing solutions that have been highly tuned and optimized, you get to bring them to the cloud for further optimization, better TCO, more expanded reach, and then you get to count on the Nutanix roadmap for perpetuity. So all of the work that my friends at Nutanix are doing to make Nutanix clusters or NC2 better, you get to count on that. And you know, we have a lot of plans with our friends at Nutanix to drive more integration with Azure to continue to lower the cost and expand the scenarios.

Jason Lopez

Brett Tanzer is the VP of product management at Microsoft. He's been at the company since the 1990s and has sort been in the position of seen-it-all done-it-all throughout his career. Today he's helping Microsoft's Azure customers more easily build out their hybrid cloud IT operations through partnerships like the one they have with Nutanix. In late 2022, the two companies released NC2 on Azure, with allows an IT team to emulate a Nutanix-powered datacenter in Azure. This gives them the best balance of private and public cloud infrastructure. For this podcast we recorded a conversation with Brett, Ken Kaplan who's the Editor in Chief of The Forecast, a Nutanix publication, and Kanchan Mirani, director of product marketing at Nutanix. What you're about to hear is a curated version of the conversation. We pick up where Brett is talking about how Azure's customer needs have changed and what's happening today.

Brett Tanzer

Azure in general has a very diverse set of customers and we're seeing customers come from all industries across all walks of life and all geos. We benefited from that. We certainly started with a focus on the enterprise customer and we continue to maintain that, but that's our sweet spot. I would say now, particularly in the area where I'm in, we're just focused on more mission critical workloads with higher SLAs. Whether you're looking at our SAP services or you're looking at our Nutanix services or you're looking at others, we're really focused on enabling that. And these are the crown jewels of the organization. Their most important workloads run on them. And so that's where our focus has expanded, not just from understanding IT and kind of the enterprise, but into mission critical enterprise workloads that enable people to modernize their applications.

Ken Kaplan

One of the things you talked about, your passions or interests, was, say, helping a developing country or an organization really modernize, I guess.

Brett Tanzer

You know, I think it's very rudimentary things. Providing access to technology in a timely manner in a region that doesn't have it enables a lot. Provides the ability for people to get access to future generations of technologies from ISVs like Nutanix and others. And then combining that with the breakthrough technologies that we're working on in Azure around AI

and analytics and so on and so forth, that enables those scenarios because you know that developer with a team of two may have to deliver solutions as complex as an organization that used to have a team of 50, and the only way that they're going to get to do it is if we bring simpler solutions and give them access to these technologies that make it easier to build things at lower cost with more reliability without in some sense having to train a massive workforce.

Ken Kaplan
Yeah, and it kind of leads me back to the partnership and the ecosystem where you're working in now. In this time is it driving the need for these partnerships more than ever because there's just so much going on out there and does that help the IT professionals?

Brett Tanzer
Well, I think it has a lot of trust in their ISVs like Nutanix and others. And so partnering with folks like Nutanix or others helps bring both trust and skills to these solutions in the cloud. I mean, imagine if Microsoft had to relearn every technology that was out there to operate it by itself, that would be very hard and customers would find themselves with many fewer options than the ecosystem model we have today. The reason why Microsoft partnered with Nutanix to bring NC2 to the cloud is really because of Azure and Microsoft strategy to meet the customer where they are. There are a lot of customers using Nutanix on premises today. In order for them to bring those solutions to Azure, they would've had to completely rewrite them from scratch versus us enabling them to go bring those solutions as they are into the cloud and start to take advantage of this. And so this is part of a strategy that Nutanix and Microsoft really share, which is meaning the customers where they are helping them address what are the biggest problems they have today, things around TCO, security, reliability, global reach, all of those things that the cloud can enable for them in the next few years by making it easier for them to take advantage of it. And so we're really focused on helping customers right now with the set of challenges they have today and over the next 12 to 24 months. And that's what NC2 enables us to do very easily for customers.

Ken Kaplan
What does the Nutanix Microsoft Azure partnership mean for developers, like app developers? Is this a good thing for developers because…?

Brett Tanzer
We provide more access to technology, we provide lower friction and we provide them a way that the legacy investments they've already made in their solutions can still become viable and future-proofed. So it helps them on a bunch of dimensions. If you're a developer who's looking to build the next generation application around data, you really have a lot of benefits and a lot of access to technology, whether it's through Microsoft tools, Nutanix systems, Microsoft services, or the combination of all of them together.

Kanchan Mirani
So in addition to the developer, it's the infrastructure architect who actually benefits probably the most from it because the idea is what it gives the infrastructure architect the ability to do is

locate parts of the infrastructure where it makes sense to locate them, make it all work together. You know, there's the developer. Sure. And the developer usually relies on the infrastructure architect for things like that. And that's where the biggest impact comes in to be able to create almost that distributed infrastructure so that, you know, it performs in the most efficient manner, both in terms of TCO and performance.

Brett Tanzer
So then to your question on what's in it for developers, what I would say is for both developers and infrastructure architects, it makes it easy for them to access technologies to go build more efficient applications and continue to do that in the cloud as the technology stack evolves and the infrastructure offerings we bring with Nutanix to market continue to expand.

Jason Lopez
The world of IT has changed dramatically since the 1990s when Brett Tanzer started at Microsoft. He thinks back to on prem systems were built around local control with capacity being a major issue and managing efficiency being one, as well, and, always planning around future development. There was a cost curve, Tanzer says, where an organization had to learn how run the operation before understanding how to make it efficient. But when he talks about trends, while the role of IT is being re-defined with new apps and platforms, some of the challenges remain the same.

Brett Tanzer
There's a lot of trends around the cloud. I think the ones we hear most about of late are the desire to really improve TCO in the face of the current climate. And so that's certainly something we're spending a lot on. And how to rewrite applications with an eye on automation. We have great infrastructure at Microsoft that enables AI developers to go build their own models and train them for bespoke scenarios, but we also have a lot of systems and tools that make it possible for someone to take advantage of AI models that have been created and optimize them for their domain. And so we can embrace roughly all tiers of AI development in Azure. Like everything else, customers have to figure out how it brings value to their stakeholders and then how to apply the tool.

Ken Kaplan
You're able to do that based on some other customers that might have a similar challenge.

Brett Tanzer
We provide infrastructure, we provide guidance, we provide tools, and we do try to provide thought leadership. You know, we have a lot of partnerships in the AI arena that really make it helpful for us to go bring that next generation technology to customers who might be all along the spectrum.

Kanchan Mirani
So yeah, we talked about AI and we hear a lot about generative AI and new kinds of technologies like the metaverse and there's obviously lots of excitement around blockchain.

And sustainability is becoming a big, big topic. Look at all these interesting trends, which excite me, I'd love to know what excites you, Brett, just in general, not necessarily related to Azure. What is it that's becoming something that's exciting for you personally?

Brett Tanzer
I think for me personally, probably given kind of where I am in my career and where I am in my family, it's just the opportunities that a young person has trying to build something with technology today. Whether it's one of my children who wants to be a broadcaster who is able to use technology to provide access to data that he didn't have before. On the other side, my son who is trying to become a singer on Broadway and now has the opportunity to really debut his craft virtually online to audiences and he has access to communities long before he is ever successfully landed a role. You know, you just see such a broadening of opportunities that are available to everybody, given what technology can do. And I like being on the very bleeding edge of that and helping customers who've got these big investments, take them to the cloud as their first step so they can make the next step. I think there's another 20 or 30 years on it.

Ken Kaplan
At least.

Kanchan Mirani
Yeah, there's a kind of democratization of technology and you know, the way it's kind of impacting not just businesses for individuals that is leading to a lot of opportunity to meet those needs really. So it's, it's a little bit of chaos, but it's full of opportunity I'd say.

Brett Tanzer
It's really an exciting time. Like the work that we're doing today will have societal benefits for generations to come. The technology barriers have been knocked down. You have access to compute that you didn't have before. You have access to scientists and data. You have access to open source solutions where you can take the expertise of others and apply them to your domain. A lot of those barriers that existed that just prevented people from doing it, they get knocked down. And so the cloud and next generation technologies are helping to enable that. What we do with it as a society though, is still to be determined, but we certainly have a lot more enablement and power to go solve those problems today than we did when I started my job 30 years ago.

Jason Lopez

Brett Tanzer, is the Vice President of product management at Microsoft. He chatted with Ken Kaplan the Editor-in-Chief of The Forecast and Kanchan Mirani, director of product marketing at Nutanix. I'm Jason Lopez. This is the Tech Barometer podcast produced by The Forecast. We invite you to listen or read up on other stories about technology and the people in tech at theforecastbynutanix dot com.