



**Partner:** RackForce

**Web Site:** [www.rackforce.com](http://www.rackforce.com)

**Partner Size:** 1-99

**Country or Region:** Canada

**Industry:** Telecommunications

#### Partner Profile

RackForce is an infrastructure and hosting-service provider that employs 25 people and serves customers worldwide. As of mid-2006, its state-of-the-art data centers hosted more than 100,000 Web sites.

#### Software and Services

Microsoft Virtual Server 2005 R2

Microsoft Windows Server 2003

Microsoft Operations Manager 2005

Microsoft Provisioning System

Microsoft Windows Automated Deployment Services v1.1

For more information about other Microsoft partner successes, please visit: [www.microsoft.com/resources/casestudies](http://www.microsoft.com/resources/casestudies)

## Hosting-Service Provider Increases Revenue, Expands Market with Windows-Based Solution

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*RackForce, a rapidly growing hosting-service provider, wanted to expand market opportunities with products featuring broader access to co-technologies and greater market stability than its Linux-focused offerings. So the company developed new products based on Microsoft Virtual Server 2005 R2. As a result, RackForce and its customers have enjoyed benefits in revenue, scalability, accessibility, and support.*

#### Business Needs

Founded in 2001 and based in Western Canada, RackForce is one of North America's fastest-growing infrastructure and hosting-service providers. RackForce has pioneered such offerings as unmetered bandwidth, instant activation, and, especially, Dynamic Dedicated Server (DDS) products based on virtualization technology.

For its first few years in operation, RackForce offered products based exclusively on the Linux operating system and other open-source technologies. In late 2004, however, company executives began considering the advantages of also offering products based

on the Microsoft® Windows® operating system and related technologies.

“We saw that many businesses are more comfortable with a Microsoft-based platform than one based on Linux,” explains Randall Robinson, General Manager, RackForce.

“These businesses want the ability to expand their services through the greater choice of co-technologies available in a Windows environment, and they want the higher level of market stability that a Microsoft platform can provide.”

Another advantage for RackForce was what Vice President Brian Fry calls “the Microsoft vision and direction” in the hosting market.

"We valued the Microsoft commitment to the integration of voice, video, text, and data, and considered Microsoft the only company that could smoothly accomplish that level of integration."

Fry and his colleagues also saw the Windows operating system as a strong platform for eventually offering Software as a Service. "There are great ideas for Software as a Service in the open-source community, but they are not as well-supported as what we found in Windows."

Robinson concurs. "Whether it's the DDS model and virtual private server [VPS] or Software as a Service, support is absolutely central for customers seeking hosting products," he notes. "We have a particular focus on supporting virtualization products such as Microsoft Virtual Server and on making our DDS model the most scalable and robust in the industry."

Yet another advantage for RackForce comes in the area of licensing. "We can now offer our customers total consistency and continuity—not only with a fully Microsoft-based Web-hosting platform, but also with flexible licensing from a single company," Fry reports. "That supports our vision of seamless scalability to an extent we could not do with an open-source solution."

## Solution

In mid-2005, RackForce became a Microsoft Certified Partner and began working closely with consultants from the Microsoft Partner Program to develop and market DDS products based on the emerging Microsoft Virtual Server 2005 R2 virtualization technology for the Windows Server System™ platform.

## Benefits

Robinson and Fry say the decision to join the Microsoft Partner Program and to release Windows-based Dynamic Dedicated Server products has been good for RackForce and its customers alike.

- **Higher revenue.** RackForce's initial Windows-based DDS product was successful right away, attracting business from both new and existing customers. Just six months after its release, it generated 20 percent of all sales, second only to the company's flagship product at 25 percent.
- **Affordable scalability.** RackForce is bolstering its scalability message by offering a comparatively low-cost Windows-based DDS product that can be scaled up with more powerful hardware and scaled out with the myriad choices of Windows-compatible products in the marketplace.
- **Broad accessibility.** With its Windows-based DDS products, Fry says, "RackForce now has offerings that are familiar and welcoming to businesses at all levels of technology sophistication. Such offerings are simply not available in the Linux world."
- **Solid support.** No matter how powerful a solution they need, RackForce customers can feel confident that the foundation of its Windows-based DDS products—Microsoft Virtual Private Server 2005 and Microsoft Windows Server 2003—will be supported. "That's a kind of certainty with Windows that we cannot offer with Linux," Robinson says.

Being a Microsoft Certified Partner in the Microsoft Partner Program has also been a good thing for RackForce.

- **Vast resources.** "Far more than any open-source vendor, Microsoft has the money to spend on promoting understanding, which translates to a wealth of business and technology guidance for us," Robinson says. "This helps RackForce to learn, to grow, and to stay ahead of the pack."
- **Wider community.** "Working with a company like Microsoft that's connected to so many businesses worldwide gives us access to thousands of experts with whom we can exchange ideas for moving forward with our technology," Fry says. "This is in stark contrast to the Linux world, where you rely largely on your customer base for that."
- **Greater visibility.** Thanks largely to increased exposure resulting from joint marketing efforts with Microsoft, RackForce has reached top positioning in Canadian search-engine rankings for "virtual private server" and "dynamic dedicated server." According to Fry, "There's no doubt we are doing a better job of reaching targeted customers and building our brand."

Because of the success of its Windows-based DDS solutions, RackForce is now incorporating Windows Automated Deployment Services v1.1, Microsoft Provisioning System, and Microsoft Operations Manager 2005 into its business practice.

"With these technologies, whose functionality is hard to find in the open-source world, we'll be able to fully automate our provisioning process and save countless man hours," Robinson says. "This will allow us to have more products available for Instant Activation and vastly simplify our growth path."