



**rackspace**

Customer Case Study – Retail

# J.Crew

After migrating from a legacy hosting provider, J.Crew partnered with Rackspace to expand its private and public cloud capabilities, giving the company the flexibility it needed to meet future business needs while minimizing added complexity and maintaining security and compliance.

## Our customer

J.Crew Group, Inc. is an internationally recognized omnichannel retailer of women's, men's and children's apparel, shoes and accessories.

## The obstacles they faced

To thrive in the fast-moving retail space, J.Crew needed an extremely flexible infrastructure platform with the ability to support unforeseen business requirements and use cases.

## How we helped

IT Transformation; Rackspace Colocation; Managed Hosting – Dedicated Servers; Managed Private Cloud – VMware®; Managed Public Cloud – Fanatical Support® for AWS; Productivity and Collaboration; Ecommerce Hosting; Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP); Professional Services

## What we achieved together

J.Crew is 12 months ahead of schedule, with access to private and public cloud flexibility to help them adapt to a changing industry landscape.

*J.Crew*

## An introduction to J.Crew

J.Crew Group, Inc. is an internationally recognized omnichannel retailer of women's, men's and children's apparel, shoes and accessories. As of May 30, 2018, the company operates 228 J.Crew retail stores, 121 Madewell stores, and 175 factory stores (including 42 J.Crew Mercantile stores), as well as jcrew.com, jcrewfactory.com, madewell.com.

For J.Crew to thrive in the fast-shifting retail landscape, technical agility is paramount. It needed a highly flexible IT infrastructure solution that would allow it to satisfy as-of-yet unforeseen business needs, such as being able to support innovative personalization tactics that bridge both the in-store and online experience. Knowing its existing infrastructure solution wasn't up to the task, J.Crew realized that it was time for a big change. And it knew it didn't want to navigate such a complex transformation on its own.

*“Not only will [Rackspace] not penalize you [for moving workloads to a public cloud provider], but they can assist you with that migration and provide a value-add even after you've moved to the cloud.”*

Michael Jacobs – CTO, J.Crew

“We needed to find a strategic partner and somebody that could provide us with the flexibility that we needed to move forward,” said Michael Jacobs, CTO at J.Crew.


## The journey of a thousand miles

“Goal number one was to choose a technology platform that is not necessarily complex, but able to accommodate whatever we throw at it — whether it be processing capabilities, or flexibility to move to the cloud, or bandwidth capabilities so that we can do things at the store that we hadn't even imagined yet,” said Jacobs.

“So if [the business is] talking about delivering video feeds to our stores, as an example, do we have the infrastructure that's capable of doing that? If they're looking at providing some sort of new data link, do we have the ability to stand that up and be in position where we don't have to tell them it's going to take months? Thinking about the vendors that could accept that challenge and thrive in that environment, it was a fairly short list.”

Ultimately, J.Crew partnered with Rackspace, both to support its existing legacy infrastructure and to help the business evolve in whatever direction it needed, with a flexible contract that doesn't lock it into any given technology or service provider.

“We now have another arrow in our quiver, which is that if it makes more sense to host in the cloud, we have the ability to do that,” explained Jacobs. “And then the bonus was, not only will [Rackspace] not penalize you [for moving workloads to a public cloud provider], but they can assist you with that migration and provide a value-add even after you've moved to the cloud.”

A photograph of a man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a dark grey suit jacket over a light-colored button-down shirt. He is standing in front of a large window with a view of a city skyline. He has his hands in his pockets and is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression.

*“We're probably 12 months ahead of what I had originally envisioned.”*

Michael Jacobs  
CTO, J.Crew

## Evolving to thrive in a multi-cloud world

To begin their new partnership, J.Crew and Rackspace executed a straightforward one-to-one migration of J.Crew's VMware-based DR environment to a Rackspace data center. Then, when it came time to migrate their production workloads, J.Crew required vCenter API access to run certain business-critical tooling. However, due to compliance reasons, this capability wasn't possible in its shared vCenter environment.

To address the issue, the Rackspace recommended that J.Crew dovetail the migration of its production environment (which had already been planned), with an upgrade to Rackspace Private Cloud powered by VMware. This solution both satisfied J.Crew's initial requirements and gave it access to true private cloud capabilities, enabling its IT team to automate infrastructure as code and deliver self-service capabilities on its dedicated private environment.

Similarly, J.Crew has also leveraged Rackspace expertise to take the plunge into public cloud while continuing to satisfy strict security and compliance standards.

"It's important to keep J.Crew fully compliant and secure, regardless of application or platform," said Jacobs. "The challenge for us, and one of the reasons why we've engaged Rackspace professional services, is: how do we create that same level of security on platforms that we don't have a whole lot of experience with?"

To that end, J.Crew worked closely with the certified specialists at Rackspace to design secure, performant environments for key AWS workloads. "Having Rackspace expertise on the bench in the security space has already paid dividends, as [they] provide us

with the assistance to architect those new environments," said Jacobs.

## The bend-over-backwards flexibility of Rackspace support

In the world of retail IT, things shift quickly and not everything goes as planned. As such, the ability to roll with the punches is another key aspect of the flexibility J.Crew required from Rackspace to support its business.

"[Rackspace has] certainly demonstrated time and time again that if [they] don't have a ready solution for something, [they'll] figure it out," said Jacobs. "Again, there's that flexibility and that willingness to do whatever is required to make us successful."

"From my personal perspective, I would say the thing that stands out is, every time I've had a challenge, the team has worked — whether it be on the technical side or the sales side — to find a way to help me out."

*"J.Crew is now on a platform that allowed us to move without introducing a lot of complexity, yet still gave the benefit of being on a true transformation platform."*

Michael Jacobs – CTO, J.Crew

## Adaptability accelerates transformation

At the outset of its partnership with Rackspace, J.Crew had prioritized keeping complexity to a minimum. "But by the same token, we wanted to be partnered with an

organization that allows us to then begin the countdown to launch to progressive platforms in the cloud," said Jacobs. "And how do we do so in a way that does not punish us from a commercial perspective?"

Already J.Crew has gone far beyond a one-to-one vCenter migration. "I think that we were a little bit surprised at the pace with which we transformed," said Jacobs. "We're probably 12 months ahead of what I had originally envisioned."

"That, to me, is the headline: that J.Crew is now on a platform that allowed us to move without introducing a lot of complexity, yet still gave the benefit of being on a true transformation platform."

## About Rackspace

At Rackspace, we accelerate the value of the cloud during every phase of digital transformation. By managing apps, data, security and multiple clouds, we are the best choice to help customers get to the cloud, innovate with new technologies and maximize their IT investments. As a recognized Gartner Magic Quadrant leader, we are uniquely positioned to close the gap between the complex reality of today and the promise of tomorrow. Passionate about customer success, we provide unbiased expertise, based on proven results, across all the leading technologies. And across every interaction worldwide, we deliver Fanatical Experience™. Rackspace has been honored by Fortune, Forbes, Glassdoor and others as one of the best places to work.

Learn more at [www.rackspace.com](http://www.rackspace.com) or call us at 1-800-961-2888.

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March 11, 2019 / Rackspace-Case-Study-J-Crew-IT-12189