Lenovo   **VIVA** Energy Australia   **intel.**

'Store-in-a-box': Viva Energy Retail Revamps Coles Express with Azure Stack HCI

Viva Energy is a leading energy company that supplies about a quarter of Australia's fuel requirements under the brand Shell. They make, import, blend and deliver fuels, lubricants, solvents and bitumen through their extensive national and international supply chains. The organization has recently made a **pivot in their strategy to become the largest convenience retailer**, with the acquisition of Coles Express, On The Run (OTR) and Liberty. This move away from fossil fuels, and transforming the convenience retail experience paves the way for several opportunities where Microsoft can support their strategic objectives.

Deal Summary

Customer

Viva Energy Retail

Headquarters

Melbourne, Victoria

Industry

Energy & Utilities

Web Site

Viva Energy

Customer Challenges

Viva Energy Retail (VER) faces the **complex challenge of transitioning 650 Coles Express** stores to a new VER environment by April 2025. This involves implementing a new POS solution using D365, replacing network infrastructure, and updating all in-store hardware, including BOS servers, POS workstations, handheld scanners, pin pads, and fuel controllers.

Additionally, they must ensure **seamless integration** with existing peripheral devices while managing the logistics of warehousing, pre-staging, shipping, and deploying around 8,000+ new hardware devices.

The critical aspect of this transition is to execute it in a way that **minimizes disruption, allowing the stores to continue trading during each deployment cutover**.

VER also had a number of **requirements for the physical servers housed in store**, including; small form factor, powerful processing for large amounts of data, minimal noise levels, no need for cooling, and to fit under a desk.

Solution Overview

Since September 2023, our team has been diligently showcasing the capabilities and value of Azure Stack HCI, powered by Intel®, to Viva Energy Retail. We participated in a comprehensive procurement and vendor evaluation process, where VER assessed the strengths of various deployment and hardware partners. We are proud to recognize and congratulate LAB[3] and Lenovo on their RFP wins. Both vendors not only demonstrated their capabilities and ability to collaborate with Microsoft, but they also consistently overcame technical challenges and won the hearts and minds of VER over several months. The consortium we have established is a gold standard, with everyone united in achieving VER's business outcomes.

LAB[3] provided VER with an **innovative Store-in-a-Box solution centered on Azure Stack HCI**, leveraging LAB[3]'s deep expertise and strong partnership with Microsoft. The solution ensured a robust, **scalable platform for transforming Coles Express stores**. LAB[3]'s technical teams collaborated seamlessly with VER, Lenovo and Microsoft throughout the Proof of Concept (POC) project, effectively addressing challenges and ensuring successful delivery. The core of the solution focuses on deploying **HCI with automation as its center, encompassing Azure Arc to drive a single pane of glass solution**.

The Lenovo ThinkEdge SE350v2 has been validated for use with 23H2 and the Lenovo teams worked closely with Microsoft and LAB[3] to ensure all the server firmware drivers were up to date and compatible with 23H2.

The Results

- The automation capability of Azure Stack HCI 23H2 allows the VER team to manage vast, distributed infrastructure with ease, and the Lenovo ThinkEdge SE350v2 provides the manageability and processing power of an enterprise server in a form factor that can fit under a desk in a small back-office, with or without air-conditioning, without disturbing the employee working next to it, or customers visiting nearby.
- Together, this platform allows VER to use their in-house cloud skills, in conjunction with keeping latency low for on-premise applications such as Point of Sale, CRM, and other general store functions, and keep services up in the event of a connectivity loss.
- The VER Back Office Server (BOS) retail store compute refresh is a massive win for Microsoft and Lenovo, with it being **one of the largest rollouts of Azure Stack HCI 23H2 on Lenovo ThinkEdge Servers in the world**.
- This solution will then be deployed to the OTR (400 stores) and Liberty (200 stores) businesses over the next few years.

What's Next?

- Viva Energy Retail is interested in doing a **public case study (with all three organisations) to showcase this transformational achievement** including video interviews, media release and print.
- Lenovo, LAB3 and Microsoft are looking to **replicate this win** with customers in Australia and across the world! **Wherever you have edge compute, come speak to us!**
- **Enterprise Data Strategy:** Viva Energy has worked with LAB[3] and Accenture to construct a comprehensive enterprise data strategy, underpinned by Fabric.
- **IoT Hub POC:** unifying operations across the Viva Energy Australia group from their Azure cloud, to Edge locations (convenience stores, their refinery and OT systems).
- **Generative AI Use Cases Acceleration**
- **Creation of a MACC:** further strengthening the strategic partnership between Viva Energy and Microsoft.
- **Executive Team Engagement at an EBC:** Viva Energy is targeting to host their executive team at an EBC in late 2024.
- **Viva On-Stage Invitation to Tech World '24** – Seattle (Lenovo Invitation)