

U.S. Govt. Agency Eliminates Environmental Sprawl and Builds a Central Platform for Delivering IT

Executive Summary

An organization with numerous branch offices had the need to become a central service provider to all locations. This entity faced the challenge of segregated IT resources, and wanted to establish the consistent delivery of IT services and end user experiences while adhering to compliance mandates and maintaining strong security.

Challenges

- » Branches at various locations consumed virtual desktop and IT resources disparately
- » Struggled with compliance enforcement and consistent security practices
- » Lacked a single, unified point of access for delivering IT services

Solutions

Primary:

- » VMware Horizon
- » vRealize Automation

Supporting:

- » [VMware NSX](#)
- » vRealize Operations

Administrative Organization Struggled with Environmental Sprawl and Security Concerns

An administrative organization faced an overwhelming IT problem: their geographically disparate branch offices operated their own IT setups, using a variety of systems to support desktop computing. Consequently, while the customer was still setting guidelines and being held responsible for compliance, they lacked both a unified mechanism for enforcing it, as well as the wherewithal to deliver IT services to each branch.

Security concerns were also an issue. Without a network virtualization solution, the customer's data centers were at increased risk of security threats due to their traditional network architectures and firewalls solely designed to protect the perimeter of the network. In addition, environmental sprawl made it difficult to manage widespread technology components. Lastly, the network was reliant on hardware, which introduced operations complications and limited the customer's IT team to feature sets intrinsic to the hardware.

Business Impacts

- ✓ The primary entity transitioned into a service provider to its multiple branch offices, successfully delivering consistent hosted services.
- ✓ Security and compliance concerns were eliminated as a result of the unified, consistent delivery of virtual desktop resources.
- ✓ The gap between the customer and the vendor was bridged as a result of the communications liaison efforts of August Schell.
- ✓ VMware and August Schell engineers used their collective expertise to deliver a comprehensive Software-defined Data Center (SDDC) to the customer.

Architecting the Right Solution for Centrally, Securely Delivering IT Services

Trey Ransbotham, VMware Consulting Engineer at August Schell explained, "They wanted to become a service provider. The branches themselves are almost like individual customers of the administrative office, sort of like a big company trying to provide hosted services for all its multiple branches."

The customer decided to implement VMware Horizon to create a unified desktop environment which could be made available across all branches. "Each branch wanted to manage their own baseline image for their desktops, but still have security and compliance enforced by the administrative office in a central location," he continued.

vRealize Automation was also chosen to support the VDI and server workload needs of each site. "vRealize Automation was a huge part in the onboarding process, doing each site setup, and giving them power to create services to support their desktop infrastructure," Ransbotham explained. vRealize Operations would be layered on top to facilitate intelligent IT operations management.

"Finally, to complement their primary services, VMware NSX was definitely necessary, which was my primary role. The customer needed micro-segmentation in their data center so that they could secure their desktops and server workloads automatically. It was important for each individual branch's workloads to be able to sit next to each other from a hardware perspective, but without any access between them," he said.

Executing On Delivering Comprehensive IT Services

With August Schell and VMware to support the customer's efforts, the implementation began. The project started with a month of requirements gathering, a collaborative effort among all technology resources internally, with August Schell, and

VMware. "This was really going to involve every piece of the data center, so we needed all hands on deck," Ransbotham said.

Next, business cases were developed and gathered while architecture documentation was created. After four months of planning and design, the implementation of the solution in a mock environment began.

"We had a mock environment deployed to show that we'd be able to spin up desktops and servers and secure them with the network. Once that was a-go, we set up the full environment in production. It was pretty much a greenfield environment, so we didn't have to reengineer the vCenter. We just worked together to build it in parallel. Then, each branch went through their own onboarding process."

Freedom from Infrastructure Management, Successfully Delivering Unified Desktop Environments Across Locations

In the end, the project was successfully implemented, thanks to the synergistic efforts of August Schell and VMware, as well as the internal resources of the customer. The administrative office was able to forego infrastructure management and provide a central point for users to connect and manage what they're entitled to manage.

The customer was also able to enforce compliance requirements across all locations, while resting easy knowing that their security risk exposure was decreased significantly.

Further, communications between VMware and the customer were streamlined as a result of the liaison efforts of August Schell. "I was able to bridge the gap between the customer and their plans, and the vendor and their general way of doing things. Facilitating that communication was really key, because I was going to make sure that both the customer and VMware were successful and happy with the end result," Ransbotham concluded.