

## Technology Distributor Deploys New Data Center

Westcon Group's next-generation data center delivers significant cost and application performance benefits.

| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  |  |
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| <b>WESTCON GROUP, INC.</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry: Technology Distributor</li> <li>Location: Tarrytown, New York, United States</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>CHALLENGE</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited scalability of storage and server infrastructure</li> <li>Aging infrastructure in need of refresh</li> <li>Need to reduce total cost of ownership</li> <li>Need to scale infrastructure to support new initiatives</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>SOLUTION</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cisco Unified Computing System as basis for data center consolidation and migration</li> <li>Cisco Services Accelerated Deployment</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>RESULTS</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported virtualized applications across entire business</li> <li>Increased business agility by simplifying management and provisioning</li> <li>Delivered significant reductions in total cost of ownership</li> </ul>              |  |

### Challenge

Westcon Group is a multinational distributor of networking and communications products, with operations in North and South America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Australia. The company's customers include value-added resellers, systems integrators, and service providers who resell solutions to small and medium-sized businesses, enterprises, and governments around the world. In addition to providing a complete range of product distribution services, Westcon offers technical and managed services capabilities, engineering support, and global project management and fulfillment capabilities.

When the company performed an analysis of its networking and data center infrastructure in 2008, it recognized several opportunities for achieving significant cost and network performance improvements. Westcon had already begun virtualizing a portion of its application server environment but needed additional infrastructure to support its virtualization goals. Much of the existing server and storage infrastructure was due for refreshing. In addition, expansion was required to support growing power and storage capacity

requirements. Duplicate server and storage infrastructures were also needed because Westcon had two production data centers: one in the United Kingdom and one in New York.

While Westcon was considering an overhaul of both data centers, Cisco launched its Unified Computing System data center platform. As a major distributor of Cisco solutions, Westcon quickly became familiar with the platform, which caused it to re-consider its data center refresh plans.

"We had already been using virtualized applications when the Cisco Unified Computing System was introduced," says William Hurley, CIO and CTO of Westcon Group, Inc. "We tested it, and it performed very, very well. Using this solution, we would be able to run our entire enterprise on less space and at a third of the cost with full redundancy. The conversation quickly turned from 'whether we do it' to 'when do we do it?'"

### Solution

Westcon's new plan was to consolidate both data centers to a single location. The new data center platform was based on the Cisco® Unified Computing System, VMware virtualization solutions, and EMC storage solutions. To assist with initial installation and configuration, Westcon chose Cisco Services.

"Because we were early adopters of the Unified Computing System, Cisco Services provided the expertise to help us quickly achieve our objectives while mitigating the risk of a brand-new infrastructure," says Yoab Gorfu, chief architect of Westcon Group. "The experience we gained during this implementation will certainly be of benefit to our customers."

Westcon worked with Cisco Services' Accelerated Deployment, a four-week fixed-scope, fixed-price engagement designed to implement the Unified Computing System in a production-ready environment while transferring knowledge to the Westcon's IT team. After an initial discovery process to survey facilities and confirm project goals, the teams went to work.

By the end of the second day, the network and data center hardware had been installed and configured, and connectivity had been established for the data and storage area networks (SAN). The teams used the Unified Computing System Manager to set up the servers, communication ports, SAN pools, policies, templates, role-based access control, and service profiles.

By the end of the first week, Westcon's core infrastructure was operating, and soon the teams had installed and configured the VMware vSphere environment. Test applications were quickly running in a virtualized environment on the Unified Computing System. In the remaining days, monitoring, management, and failover testing was concluded and presentations were conducted to transfer knowledge about the implementation and related technologies.

"The Cisco solutions architects were extremely helpful in the knowledge transfer to our teams," said Gorfu. "In addition to the Unified Computing System expertise, we were very satisfied with their VMware and networking expertise. This added value ultimately helped us stay on the right path towards achieving our goals."

"By centralizing our data center capabilities, we are able to realize both the scale and agility our IT infrastructure will require to aggressively grow our business in the coming years. Not only do we offer Cisco Unified Computing System to resellers, we are also an early adopter in implementing the solution within our own networking environment. We believe this lends an enormous degree of credibility as we offer cloud-based, virtualized data center solutions to the channel."

– Dean Douglas, president and chief executive officer of Westcon Group

## Results

The new infrastructure has greatly simplified data center operations for Westcon. The Cisco Unified Computing System consolidates the storage and the data I/O into one fabric. The boot-from-SAN stateless architecture and the Unified Computing System Manager makes server provisioning and maintenance easy, giving Westcon more business agility. It is easy to add blades, add memory to existing blades, and add virtual machines. Unified Computing System templates, policies, and service profiles allow compute capacity to grow or shrink as demand dictates; a single management domain can scale up to 320 servers.

The new environment also simplified Westcon's virtualization program. Previously, Westcon relied on over 175 physical servers across multiple geographies. Today, just 24 Unified Computing System blades support the centralized data center environment and operate virtualized applications across the entire business. Application performance is also expected to improve. When the data center consolidation is complete, Westcon Group expects to be able to process customer transactions up to twice as fast, as well as generate reports more efficiently from its single, global enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

Simplifying the data center architecture also delivered cost savings. The Unified Computing System requires less power than the previous infrastructure and has a highly efficient internal cooling capability. Having fewer switches and servers reduces capital and operating expense. Westcon has also been able to significantly reduce its overall power consumption with a smaller physical server footprint and aggressive system virtualization.

From a business perspective, the most important benefit of the new data center architecture is the knowledge gained from its deployment. The Westcon team's familiarity with Unified Computing Systems will be valuable to the

company's customers as they begin to consider and deploy similar data center solutions.

### PRODUCT LIST

#### Routing and Switching

- Cisco Unified Computing System
- Cisco MDS 9100 Series Multilayer Fabric Switches
- Cisco Catalyst 4900 Series Switches

#### Network Management

- Cisco UCS Manager

#### Services

- Accelerated Deployment Service

"By centralizing our data center capabilities, we are able to realize both the scale and agility our IT infrastructure will require to aggressively grow our business in the coming years," says Dean Douglas, president and CEO of Westcon Group. "Not do we offer the Cisco Unified Computing System to resellers, we are also an early adopter in implementing the solution within our own networking environment. We believe this lends an enormous degree of credibility as we offer cloud-based and virtualized data center solutions to the channel."

## Next Steps

The data center consolidation and migration are expected to be complete by mid-year 2010, providing a foundation for several new initiatives. Westcon intends to replace its global ERP and e-commerce systems, and the new Unified Computing System environment will deliver the flexibility and scale needed with minimal impact to the server infrastructure.

## For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Services, visit: [www.cisco.com/go/services](http://www.cisco.com/go/services)

To find out more about Cisco Unified Computing System, visit: [www.cisco.com/go/unifiedcomputing](http://www.cisco.com/go/unifiedcomputing)

To learn more about Westcon Group, Inc. visit: [www.westcongroup.com](http://www.westcongroup.com)

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