THE VIRTUAL COMPUTING ENVIRONMENT COMPANY

SERVICE PROVIDER BUILDS ENTERPRISE CLOUD

Affiliated Computer Services, Inc. increased agility with Vblock™ Infrastructure Platforms from VCE.

Executive Summary

Affiliated Computer Services, Inc., A Xerox Company
Service Provider
Dallas, Texas

Challenge

- Build enterprise-class private cloud
- Maximize business agility
- Minimize operational overhead

Solution

- Vblock 0 system

Results

- Built customer proof of concept in three weeks
- Enabled customers to begin using resources within minutes of provisioning
- Provisioned 200 virtual desktops in one afternoon

Challenge

Affiliated Computer Services, Inc. (ACS), a Xerox Company, offers business process outsourcing and IT outsourcing services, including data processing, HR benefits management, and customer relationship management services. Customers include commercial and government organizations worldwide.

To help customers increase business agility, ACS wanted to offer an enterprise cloud service for server and storage capacity on demand. “Enterprises increasingly want to consume IT on demand instead of making large upfront capital investments,” says Ken Stephens, senior vice president of global strategy and service management for ACS.

Solution

After carefully evaluating platforms for the cloud service, ACS chose the Vblock™ Infrastructure Platforms from VCE formed by Cisco, EMC, and VMware. ACS implemented the Vblock 0 system, which consists of a preintegrated Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS), VMware vSphere 4, and EMC Celerra Unified Storage. The compelling characteristics of the Vblock system for ACS include:

- **Preintegrated and pretested architecture.** The Vblock 0 solution enabled ACS to avoid the time, costs, and security risks of integrating solution components. “The partners in VCE have extensively tested Vblock Infrastructure Platforms for vulnerabilities,” says Stephens. “Rigorous testing gives ACS and our customers a high comfort level in the platform’s performance, reliability, and security.”

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Nagesh Kunamneni
Chief Technology Officer (CTO)
Affiliated Computer Services, Inc.

- **Commitment to support** due to the integrated support model from VCE. "We can call any of the three partners and know they will identify and resolve the issue no matter which component is responsible," says Nagesh Kunamneni, chief technology officer for ACS ITO.
- **Use of open standards**. The management software included in Vblock Infrastructure Platforms is based on open standards, enabling ACS to use them as the basis for innovative self-service offerings.

ACS launched the enterprise cloud service offering in March 2010. Currently, customers can use the ACS enterprise cloud service for their custom applications. Later, ACS will add support for enterprise applications and begin offering software as a service (SaaS). ACS developers have already designed an offering for Microsoft Exchange as a service.

Results

Customer Responsiveness

The ease of provisioning resources on the Vblock 0 platform helps ACS respond rapidly to customer requests, creating a competitive advantage. ACS quickly built a proof of concept for its first customer, with help from Cisco Services. "Without the Vblock system, we would have needed 60 to 90 days to configure, cable, and test servers, networking, and storage," says Kunamneni. "With the Vblock system, we set up a production system in just three weeks."

Once a customer is on board, ACS needs less than one hour to provision additional resources, and customers can begin using those resources within minutes of selecting server and storage capacity from a self-service web portal. "ACS is the first service provider to enable customers to turn up capacity for individual user groups within minutes," Stephens says. "The Vblock system gives us that flexibility because we don't have to spend time configuring system components."

The Vblock 0 system also accelerates introduction of new services, such as the ACS virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) service. When ACS was acquired by Xerox, the ACS IT team needed only one afternoon to set up 200 virtual desktops with the ACS image for Xerox managers.

More Time for Innovation

By eliminating the need to integrate and test multiple vendors' components, the Vblock 0 system frees up time for ongoing IT innovation. "Preintegrated Vblock Infrastructure Platforms allow our talented IT staff to focus on value-added activities like building customer self-service portals instead of rote tasks like debugging," says Joe Berding, vice president of technical architecture and design for ACS. "The simplicity and speed of deploying the Vblock Infrastructure Platforms are refreshing. It lets us stay in the business of serving customers, instead of tending to our technology platforms."

Simplified IT Operations

Finally, the Vblock 0 system has allowed ACS to streamline its IT organization, minimizing operational expense. "Our server, networking, and storage engineers now work in cross-functional teams, increasing the efficiency of service delivery," says Kunamneni.

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Joe Berding
Vice President of Technical Architecture and Design
Affiliated Computer Services, Inc.

In another example of simplified IT, before launching the cloud service ACS needed to certify multiple enterprise applications and operating systems on the Vblock 0 system. “On most platforms the certification effort would have taken six months, but on the Vblock 0 system it took just eight weeks,” Kunamneni says. As engineers completed each test, they used Cisco® UCS Manager service profiles to reconfigure the blade servers for the next test with just a few clicks.

Next Steps

- ACS plans to increase the return on investment from the Vblock 0 system by using it as the platform for additional services:
- New SaaS offerings on the same Vblock 0 system, including Microsoft Exchange, SAP, development platforms, and collaboration services.
- A disaster recovery service. A customer preparing for a possible data center outage due to a hurricane, for example, will be able to start a mission-critical application on the Vblock Infrastructure Platforms in another data center in less than an hour.
- More self-service capabilities for provisioning and usage monitoring.

Kunamneni concludes, “The Vblock system supports our strategy to think at the service level rather than the physical level. Customers look to ACS to help manage all services as a unified entity, and we’re succeeding by using VCE's architecture and support.”

Product and Services List

- Vblock 0 system
- Cisco Unified Computing System
- Cisco Nexus® 1000v Software Switch
- EMC Celerra Unified Storage
- VMware vSphere
- Planning, design, implementation, and support services

ABOUT VCE

VCE, the Virtual Computing Environment Company formed by Cisco and EMC with investments from VMware and Intel, accelerates the adoption of converged infrastructure and cloud-based computing models that dramatically reduce the cost of IT while improving time to market for our customers. VCE, through the Vblock platform, delivers the industry's first completely integrated IT offering with end-to-end vendor accountability. VCE's prepackaged solutions are available through an extensive partner network, and cover horizontal applications, vertical industry offerings, and application development environments, allowing customers to focus on business innovation instead of integrating, validating and managing IT infrastructure.

For more information, go to www.vce.com.