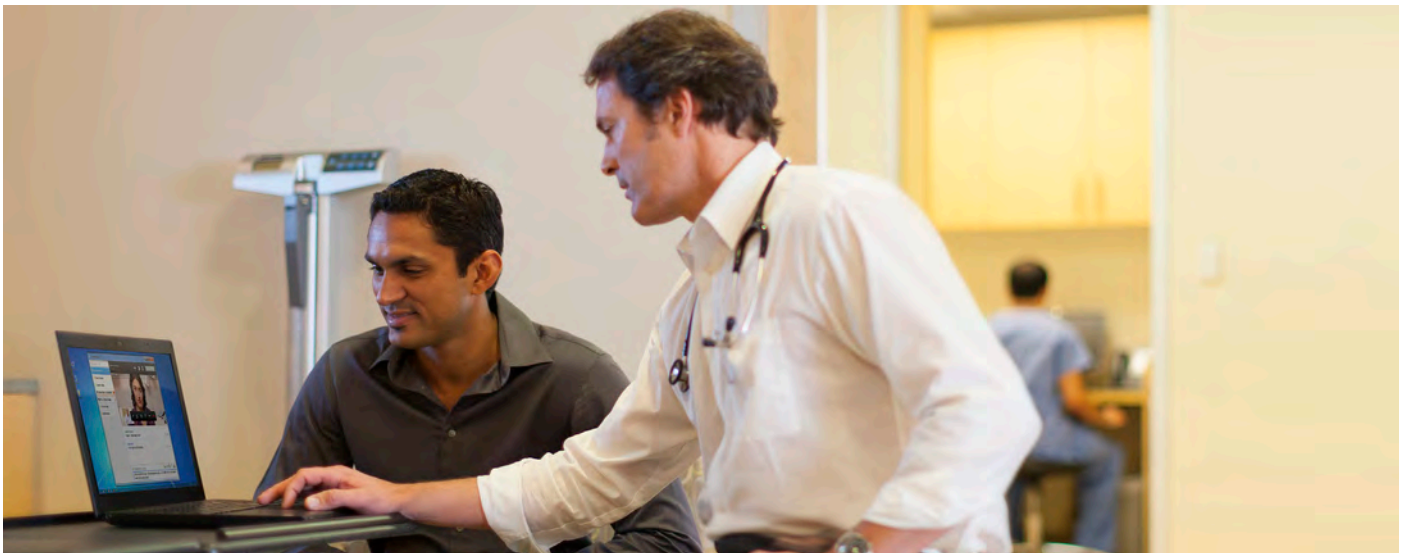
Hospital Group Gains Agility and Efficiency Needed for Future Operations

Customer Case Study



GFO chooses FlexPod for 75 percent improvement in server consolidation and new service deployment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft der Franziskanerinnen zu Olpe

Industry: Healthcare

Location: Germany

Number of Employees: 8000

Challenge

- Increase organizational agility
- Improve efficiency and reduce costs

Solution

- FlexPod pre-integrated data center platform, comprising Cisco Unified Computing System, Cisco Nexus unified switching fabric, NetApp FAS storage, and VMware virtualization software

Results

- Anticipated acceleration in deployment of new services by 75 percent
- Improved server consolidation by up to 75 percent
- Increased server utilization by at least 20 percent

Challenge

The Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft der Franziskanerinnen zu Olpe (GFO) is a non-profit-making group of more than 30 social and charity institutions in the North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate regions of Germany. Comprising 12 hospitals and 40 other care-giving sites, it's constantly challenged to reduce costs while improving patient services.

Frank Kracht, data center manager at GFO IT-Service, says: "At the same time, growth through merger and acquisition meant we had to find a way to integrate new units faster and more cost effectively, which would be highly dependent on the IT infrastructure."

However, the group's IT estate was highly dispersed, including around 400 servers in many different locations. To improve efficiency, GFO sought to centralize and consolidate resources, to introduce virtualization and reduce the amount of hardware. The event that prompted the group to act came when it began to run out of storage capacity. "As a healthcare provider, we wanted a highly secure, scalable, and more available solution," says Kracht.

Solution

As the foundation for a new data center infrastructure, GFO chose FlexPod, a pre-designed and pre-validated base data center configuration built on Cisco® Unified Computing System™ (UCS®), Cisco Nexus® unified fabric, VMware virtualization software, and NetApp storage (including FAS 3240 Stretched Metro Cluster, FAS 3210 and 3220 Nearstore for backup, and FAS 2240 for high availability).

"FlexPod was attractive, because the Cisco brand offered the reliability of a global network leader," says Kracht. "Furthermore, the GFO IT-Service team was already familiar with the technology having used it in other projects." The solution, with 150TB of storage, is located in a new data center facility based in a GFO hospital in Bonn. Two backup data centers in other locations around the city help to insure business continuity.

GFO
Ja zur Menschenwürde.

Cisco

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Cisco UCS B-Series B200 M2 Blade Servers equipped with Intel Xeon X5650 processors, were chosen for their high virtualization capacity and low computing cost. The FlexPod infrastructure supports 175 virtual machines, onto which GFO is moving all its applications including Oracle and Microsoft Structured Query Language databases, Citrix systems, and healthcare-specific software.

Results

The UCS servers in the FlexPod platform can be set up, replaced, and configured speedily thanks to service profiles. "The team can use a service profile to pull up an identical machine in a few minutes, something that would have taken hours or days previously," says Kracht. IT agility has also improved with greater ability to switch workloads between servers, and a standard computing environment that's easier to maintain and deploy.

At the same time, central FlexPod management capabilities mean that, if there's a problem, technicians can usually solve it from their desks, rather than having to travel 45 kilometers to the data center. "The FlexPod infrastructure is having a positive impact on IT," says Kracht. "It's much easier to administer, with faster recovery times, higher availability, and less downtime. Ease of administration with UCS was another factor in our decision to choose FlexPod."

UCS has allowed GFO to consolidate its server estate by up to 75 percent, reducing hardware purchasing and administration costs. At the same time, the healthcare provider is able to use virtualization to create smaller servers for specific applications. This capability saves computer memory and allows more applications to be hosted, boosting server utilization by an estimated 20 percent or more. In fact, since it was first released in 2009, Cisco UCS has demonstrated world-record performance in industry-standard benchmarks on no less than 79 occasions.

The rapid deployment features of UCS are expected to lead to faster new service delivery, with GFO expecting to see improvement, again in the order of 75 percent. And while application delivery had not previously been a major GFO concern, the FlexPod implementation has provided enough capacity headroom to support future growth.

Finally, the new infrastructure is helping to deliver new levels of application and data center reliability. "We had a broken switch in the new data center, but a redundant device took over and there was zero downtime," Kracht recalls. "In the old data center, it would have caused an unforeseen disruption."

Next Steps

GFO is still in the process of consolidating its server platforms and ultimately hopes to gain further cost savings and efficiency gains from migrating all systems and applications to FlexPod.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study go to: www.cisco.com/go/flexpod

Product List

Data Center Solutions

- FlexPod
  - Cisco UCS B200 M2 Series Blade Servers
  - VMware
  - NetApp storage (FAS 3240 Stretched Metro Cluster, FAS 3210 and 3220 Nearstore, and FAS 2240)

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Nexus 5548 Series Switches

Applications

- Microsoft Structured Query Language
- Oracle
- Citrix
- Healthcare-specific software

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