

City Saves \$4.2 Million with Shared Data Center and Storage Model

Customer Case Study



A large U.S. city brings together independent departments, streamlining operations and reducing risk with Cisco Consulting Services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer name: A large U.S. city

Industry: Public sector

Number of employees: 13,000

Business Challenge

- Support growth while managing the cost of limited city resources
- Consolidate IT strategy, architecture, planning, standards, and key enterprise application services
- Address pressing data storage and data center needs with a detailed strategy and roadmap

Solution

- Collaborative scoping, discovery, and planning meetings with Cisco Consulting Services
- Roadmaps defined for data center and storage strategies
- Analysis of costs and benefits to develop compelling business justification

Business Results

- Data center and data storage strategies save city \$4.2 million over five years
- Shared, virtualized, and tiered storage solution reduces operational complexity, streamlines operations
- Colocated data center helps reduce risk and costs while preparing city for virtualization and cloud capabilities

Business Challenge

As one of the top 20 most populous in the United States, this city needed a vision and strategy for how its IT organization would support continued growth over the next three decades. The city's Communications and Technology Management (CTM) department created a new five-year information technology strategy with the overarching goal to lower costs and leverage scale through collaboration, using savings to innovate.

One of the core tenets of this approach was to consolidate IT strategy, architecture, planning, standards, infrastructure, and key enterprise application services. This is no small effort because nine different departments, plus the CTM group, have varying levels of their own IT staff and infrastructure. Two examples of the increased demands on the city's digital storage include the police department switching to high-definition cameras and the water department beginning video-mapping of its pipes.

The city's chief information officer (CIO) chose two urgent projects as test cases for the benefits of bringing all the departments together to collaborate and share common solutions and IT services. "Our previous data storage strategy was rapidly becoming unsustainable for us, both in costs and ability to support growth. It was an obvious candidate for moving toward a citywide, virtualized, and tiered storage solution," says the CIO. "At the same time, we were facing a data center decision that provided the opportunity to look at colocating some or all of our data center facilities."

Solution

One of the first efforts under the new information technology strategy was the consolidation of Cisco contracts across the departments into one enterprisewide contract. The consolidation netted the city significant annual savings.



“Cisco helped us deliver a crisp and clear business case to nontechnical business and financial leaders, which resulted in our funding request being approved. Now we can move forward with implementing our shared services strategy.”

Senior Business Process Consultant
One of the Top 20 Largest U.S. Cities

“The goal of our engagement with Cisco was to come away with actionable intelligence and detailed plans to help us get where we needed to go,” says a senior business process consultant in the CTM department. Cisco® Consulting Services served as a vendor-neutral, expert partner on the projects, helping develop a vision and strategy for the city’s storage and data center capabilities, creating an infrastructure roadmap for the desired future state, and conducting a cost-benefit analysis to form the business cases.

To gain the buy-in required to create the citywide strategies, Cisco conducted interviews and brought together more than 60 people across the nine different departments and the central IT group to collaborate on the engagement. “The beauty of the Cisco process is that people didn’t feel that solutions were being forced on them,” says the business process consultant. “Everyone had the opportunity to contribute and feel a sense of ownership. People stayed engaged during the entire process, which resulted in a consensus on moving forward that everyone supports.” The CIO adds, “This style of collaboration is something we want to see happen more often.”

Business Results

The result was an enterprisewide strategy for the future state of the city’s data centers and data storage capabilities, a methodology for moving to the future state, and the business case to support the strategy. The business case was impressive: by sharing IT services, the city could support its growing needs while saving \$4.2 million over a five-year period.

In its trusted advisor role, Cisco accompanied the CIO to present the results of the cost analysis to the city’s IT steering committee to get approval for funding. “Cisco helped us deliver a crisp and clear business case to nontechnical business and financial leaders, which resulted in our funding request being approved,” says the CIO. “Now we can move forward with implementing our shared services strategy.”

For the CTM department, gaining consensus across the nine different departments has laid the groundwork for collaboratively sharing resources, not only on data center and data storage capabilities but in other areas of IT services and activities as well. And the iterative, inclusive scoping, discovery, and planning methodology that Cisco utilized now serves as the template for city departments to work together effectively in the future. “It’s not inconsequential that we are now not just talking about doing things together, but we are actually working together,” says the business process consultant.

In addition to the millions of dollars in savings that the two projects will achieve, the city stands to gain other benefits as well. For the storage optimization project, the strategy will support the city’s storage rate growth, currently at 30 percent annually, now and into the future. At the same time, the new, scalable storage solution will reduce operational complexity and streamline operations. A new vendor-managed colocation solution for city data centers will help reduce risk and costs while setting the stage for automated provisioning and cloud computing.

Next Steps

The CTM department continues to drive forward with its five-year information technology strategy. While putting the plans into place to implement the new data center and data storage strategies, the city is turning its attention to the next set of capabilities required: cloud computing and mobility.

More Information

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