



Maximizing Virtualization ROI



Case Study

Avidia Bank Invests in VIRTERA Virtualization Services

Operational Impact & Benefits:

- Increased operational efficiency
- Reduced hardware, power and real estate
- Reduced downtime - both planned and unplanned
- Accelerated software testing and development
- Supported growth of remote offices

The Customer

Avidia Bank was formed in 2007 by a merger between two Massachusetts financial institutions that both began life in 1869 – Hudson Savings Bank and Westborough Bank. Today, Avidia has approximately \$1 billion in assets and nine offices located in seven towns in central Massachusetts: Hudson, Westborough, Clinton, Leominster, Marlborough, Northborough and Shrewsbury.

The Challenge

Approximately 10 years ago, Hudson Savings Bank made a commitment to technology so it could better compete with larger thrifts despite its conservative IT budget. Through mid-decade that IT budget had served Hudson Savings well by populating its data center with enough servers to support current levels of business. However, the need to expand beyond the bank's 20 servers increased nearly overnight when Hudson Savings changed providers for its core back office services.

"The new provider," says Avidia Network Technician Kevin Wheeler, "required standalone servers just for their software and largely because of that relationship we started looking at adding more servers, as well as storage, just to handle the anticipated workload."

In addition to servers that supported third party services, new specialized software applications coming online to serve the increasing needs of individual departments within the bank was also driving the need to acquire new servers.

For Wheeler, rapid and secure access to data went hand-in-hand with the ability to successfully recover and restore it when needed. "One of the biggest obstacles to managing our growth was to ensure we had a solid backup plan," says Wheeler. "As recently as two years ago we used single tape backup and that was sufficient to meet our needs. However, as we grew we realized we needed more storage. How to get more storage while trying to figure out the best game plan possible for backing up the data in the event of a hardware failure were the two biggest pain points we were experiencing at that time," he says.



Company:

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Avidia Bank was created by a merger between two Massachusetts banks –Hudson Savings Bank and Westborough Bank. Avidia Bank opened for business on October 22, 2007.

Industry:

Banking – commercial and residential lending.

Sales/Service Area:

Central Massachusetts.

Operational ROI:

Reduced demand and cost for hardware, lower energy and cooling requirements, time savings.

The Approach

“When we began our research in discovering how to get more out of our existing infrastructure while meeting the needs of increasingly niche-based departments within the organization, it appeared that virtualizing our environment held the most promise in addressing both of these requirements,” says Wheeler. “We realized there would be, of course, an upfront investment hardware-wise, but we felt going forward it would be financially beneficial for the bank to go that route in creating the number of additional servers we needed while eliminating a lot of our future hardware purchasing needs altogether.”

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– Kevin Wheeler, Network Technician, Avidia Bank

That research – and an opportune suggestion from the bank’s storage vendor, EMC, convinced Wheeler that VIRTERA offered the kind of one-stop shop partnership the bank needed in order to maximize its IT investment over the long-term.

“VIRTERA offered us a singular point of contact for our virtualization project,” explains Wheeler. “They not only offered their hands-on services and the expertise to set up our infrastructure, but they also were able to walk us through the entire process and, after the fact, help us to maintain the system at a high level. That was a huge plus in their favor.”

The first steps in the process to transition 10 of the bank’s 20 servers from physical to virtual lay in VIRTERA’s assessment of the bank’s current environment. “From the start their approach was extremely practical, working with us on a blueprint before making recommendations,” says Wheeler. “From our end, for example, we made initial recommendations on which of our existing servers we would like to see virtualized, and from their end, they provided guidance on what was needed from the hardware side to make everything work.”

The Benefits

With the October 2007 merger between Hudson Savings and the Westborough Bank finalized, the virtualized environment that VIRTERA helped to cultivate substantially eased the blending of the thrifts’ respective IT assets.

"From our standpoint we kept all of our systems in place and all we really needed to do with theirs was to move their data over. With our virtual systems in place, including a virtual storage area network, the assimilation and incorporation of data onto the network is a nice easy process," says Wheeler.

According to Wheeler, the virtual environment provided by VIRTERA in combination with VMWare has delivered a number of other key advantages.

"The savings that we've realized from virtualizing our environment can be best summed up by the example of how it used to take me at least a half day, sometimes more, just to create a server. Getting that same server up and running now takes 10 minutes time or less," explains Wheeler. "That's a huge savings and as we grow and, inevitably add more servers, it's nice to know we can bring servers on line that quickly and that responsively for the benefit of the business."

Wheeler appreciates that prior to, during and even throughout post-deployment of services, VIRTERA personnel were always available to Avidia to ensure the best possible outcome.

"It's good to know that we have VIRTERA in our corner throughout this entire process. Their multi-vendor expertise and support structure has been nothing short of spectacular."

— Kevin Wheeler, Network Technician, Avidia Bank

"They were consummate professionals, guiding us in the process of how to import a server into the virtual world, or even so far as teaching us how to use third-party virtual tools to maintain the quality and performance of our network. They were always willing to go that extra mile to make sure everything was smooth, unlike other companies that come in, throw their products onto the network and then you never hear from them again," says Wheeler.

He adds, "They take the extra step of understanding how things are going. That makes our job easier and we have confidence in knowing that if something does go wrong, as rare as that happens, there's someone else at the other end of the phone I can get in touch with to help fix it rapidly and completely."

That knowledge transfer and cross section of support and unconditional responsiveness has informed Wheeler's outlook on the challenges ahead.

Wheeler also applauds VIRTERA's help with virtualizing and realizing the most benefit from the bank's Citrix-based environment and migrating to the current version of VMWare. "As we plan for future virtual expansion at the desktop and continue to reconcile the demand from users for our Citrix servers, "It's

Challenge:

Accommodate rapid company growth and the increasingly specialized applications of bank departments in a way that was secure, cost-effective, flexible and safe in the event of a hardware failure.

Solution:

VIRTERA's Green IT/Consolidation, Remote Office Optimization and Security & Compliance services.

Result:

"VIRTERA offered us an experienced single point of contact for the entire scope of our virtualization project."

— Kevin Wheeler, Network Technician, Avidia Bank

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good to know that we have VIRTERA in our corner throughout this entire process. Their multi-vendor expertise and support structure has been nothing short of spectacular and for me, because they're also willing to teach and show patience with us as we become more conversant in virtualization, I know I will never feel left alone. And in this case at least, that's a fantastic thing."

Why VIRTERA

VIRTERA understands the Virtualization landscape is changing rapidly, and decisions regarding the selection, integration, deployment and management of new technologies will have a significant impact on an organization's business efficiencies and bottom line. What makes us different also makes us the best choice for virtualization services and consultation.

- Pure professional services consulting organization
- Focused on the entire Virtualization Infrastructure eco-system
- Completely vendor neutral
- Extensive multi-vendor expertise in heterogeneous environments
- In-depth expertise in architecting complex technology solutions that map to our customers' specific business drivers
- Our unique strategy group tests and analyzes virtualization trends across the entire virtualization landscape

About VIRTERA

VIRTERA is an independent IT virtualization professional services and consulting firm. We are a leading provider of virtualization technology solutions and services to companies nationwide. Our proven Virtual Operations Framework (VOF) methodology ensures successful and rapid adoption of virtualization technologies and delivers optimum return on organizations IT investments.

Our team of certified IT architects and consultants develop, deploy and manage Virtual Infrastructure solutions designed to solve today's most challenging IT issues. VIRTERA's unique strategy group tests and analyzes virtualization trends across the entire virtual ecosystem to create leading-edge business solutions to "future proof" an organizations IT investments.

Discover how you can maximize your virtualization ROI by contacting VIRTERA at 800.848.7185, visit www.virteratech.com or email info@virteratech.com.

