



Global-Mark: Moving into the Clouds with VMware vSphere



CHALLENGE

Global-Mark's infrastructure:

- was not future proof
- did not operate in a redundant environment

SOLUTION

VMware Vsphere 4 Essential's Plus met Global Mark's needs of:

- storage capacity and scalability
- high availability environment

RESULTS

- increased physical server utilisation
- reduced time and costs associated with growing infrastructure
- increased longevity of hardware for future growth
- no downtime
- reduced human intervention in IT maintenance

Introduction

Global-Mark is an accredited certification company that offers a complete suite of programs from product compliance to management system certification. They are headquartered in Sydney, Australia and also have offices in Korea and Turkey. Global-Mark currently has over 1400 customers. Such customers include 3M, Fletcher Insulation, Westfield, and Robert Bosch.

Challenge

Supporting evidence is paramount to certification. The ability to securely store and locate information in a large volume of data is vital for this business. Global-Mark's previous infrastructure would have become a limitation with the rapid expansions of their customer base. This is because it was not future proof and it suffered from a lack of redundancy.

Future Proof

Future proof refers to the ability to successfully grow and build upon existing infrastructure without being hindered by capacity limits, server slowdowns or new hardware expenses.

Global-Mark initially had five physical servers. These servers were becoming old, required more maintenance and were reaching some hardware limitations. Laurent Michoux, Program Manager at Global-Mark says "as the number of Client Managers was growing and the number of replications becoming higher, it was clear that our infrastructure was reaching its limits and that a complete re-engineering was the best way forward."

Global-Mark was in need of a solution that would allow them to grow with confidence.

Redundancy

Global-Mark's infrastructure was also not operating in a redundant environment. This means that if they carried out server maintenance, or there was a server failure, they would experience significant down time. Without business continuity contingencies, this downtime proved costly and inconvenient. Laurent says "we had five servers, all of them critical to business. If any of them had gone pear-shaped, it would have impacted our operations."

Global-Mark was looking for a way to run their infrastructure in a high availability environment.

Solution

Global-Mark chose to update their environment with virtualisation. VMware Vsphere 4 Essentials Plus was chosen because it provided greater storage capacity and scalability for future growth and operated in a high availability environment. In addition to this, the old five servers had to be replaced by two new servers, in order to enable virtualisation.

Outcome

Through VMWare, Global-Mark reduced their physical equipment from five to two machines, whilst enhancing their machines utilisation from 8% to up to 20 virtual servers. These two host machines now run six virtual servers (Terminal Server, Application Server, DC Server, Web Server, Data Storage Server and Data Recovery Server).

“The benefit now is that we have something that is easier to maintain and future proof. Our databases can grow confidently, maintenance activities are now hidden from the users and redundancy gives us peace of mind” says Laurent.

Virtualisation has made it very simple for Global-Mark to add applications and operating systems to their virtual servers. Their storage capacity has significantly improved and they can now grow their database without having to invest in new hardware. Creating a new virtual server is an easy procedure. They can simply open VMware client, allocate a resource to this server and install it. This process only takes a few minutes.

Furthermore, through virtualisation Global-Mark now operates their infrastructure in a redundant environment. They can migrate a running virtual server from one physical server to another, without shutting it down. If a server fails, VMware will restart the machine on a different physical server without human intervention. Additionally, when Global-Mark needs to undertake server maintenance they simply put their system into ‘maintenance mode’ and live migrate to another physical server. This ensures that IT is ‘always on’ so that business operations are not interrupted. “The great thing is that this is completely transparent to the end user, they don’t notice any difference” says Laurent.



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