



INDUSTRY

Pharmaceutical

CHALLENGES

- The company wanted to move to a virtual infrastructure based on VMware
- The company was at a point where it needed to virtualize its critical and high-volume systems
- The company wanted expert guidance for this key initiative

SOLUTION

- The company and a TAM began by focusing on quick wins to build confidence
- The TAM provided access to VMware experts and helped reach across traditional IT silos
- The TAM helped virtualize key systems, including the company's Oracle and SAP platforms

RESULTS

- Access to deep VMware knowledge allowed fact-based decision making
- Helped the company succeed with an aggressive timeline for virtualization
- Reduced the number of servers from 40 down to 8
- Virtualized 98% of infrastructure, reducing complexity and increasing agility

Pharmaceutical Firm Works With VMware Technical Account Manager Services to Virtualize Critical Infrastructure

With the help of a VMware Technical Account Manager, this pharmaceutical firm has accelerated its implementation of VMware technology.

The Challenge

With an interest in increasing agility and reducing costs in its IT infrastructure, this pharmaceutical firm started virtualizing a few of its smaller systems with plans to extend the technology across most of its infrastructure, which encompasses some 1,500 servers. The company was reaching the point in this process where it needed to move past those relatively simple systems and begin virtualizing systems at the heart of its IT infrastructure. "We were standardizing on VMware, and we wanted to start tackling some key infrastructure areas—systems with our biggest and most critical workloads," said the IT director at the firm.

This represented a big step for the virtualization initiative. "We needed somebody who could be our guide—somebody who could help us find the right technologies, the right practices and right people within VMware," the IT director said. To get that guidance, the firm brought a VMware Technical Account Manager (TAM) onto the project.

The Solution

The IT team and the TAM began by targeting the projects that could produce quick, visible results. That approach succeeded in building confidence in virtualization among both the IT team and the business groups. As a result, the firm decided to engage the TAM for the long term, as part of a new enterprise agreement with VMware.

The TAM worked with the IT team to steadily bring virtualization to a variety of systems, starting with the firm's Microsoft Exchange and SQL servers and ending most recently with the company's SAP platform.

A key step in this work was the virtualization of the company's Oracle-based back-end systems. "We were a little hesitant about our ability to virtualize our Oracle platform," said the IT director. "This was one of the areas where our TAM really made a difference." The firm would occasionally run across conflicting information about how to proceed, and the TAM would step in to sort out the issues. At one point, said the IT director, "he connected us to an expert at VMware who actually wrote the book on how to virtualize Oracle databases." The TAM also coordinated work with the EMC storage teams that were part of the effort.

Overall, said the IT director, "the TAM made sure that our Oracle database team had absolutely all the information—they needed for virtualization—benchmarks, best-practice guides, etc." In the end, this effort enabled the firm to reduce the number of servers hosting its Oracle environment from 40 down to 8.

Throughout all this work, the TAM provided the IT team with technical knowledge and guidance. He often acted as a direct channel to VMware expertise, quickly finding the right VMware product managers and engineers as the firm

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IT director at the firm

needed them. In addition, said the IT director, “he’s provided us with insights about what others in our industry are doing in terms of implementation, which helps us plan our projects.”

The TAM also helped ensure that accurate information about VMware and virtualization was finding its way across traditional silos, working closely with the firm’s IT teams responsible for UNIX systems, applications, networks, and so forth. And, said the IT director, “he was very useful in providing information to our senior management so that they were comfortable moving ahead with this process.”

Business Benefits and Results

The TAM’s support has been a vital element in the firm’s ability to take advantage of virtualization on an increasingly large scale. “We kept on having success with more and more critical work loads, which enabled us to go for the next level. That’s why we are about 98 percent virtualized today,” said the IT director. “And throughout this entire journey, our TAM has been with us.”

Having streamlined access to VMware experts was key, the IT director continued. The knowledge that the TAM provided enabled fact-driven decision-making as the project progressed—and helped keep the implementation on track. “When you are in a crunch to get things done, and you have questions and issues that come up, speedy resolution is of utmost importance,” he said. “The TAM’s help there was invaluable.”

Over the course of these initiatives, the firm has renewed the TAM services engagement three times said the IT director. “We do that on a regular basis now, because the TAM’s service is that important to us.”

The TAM has clearly helped the firm shorten the learning curve—and keep to an aggressive schedule in adopting the technology. “Our TAM has helped us pursue very rapid virtualization,” the IT director said. “When he started, we were just getting going. Now, two years later, we just finished virtualizing our entire SAP environment, which was the last piece. This speed was possible because of the support from our TAM.”

Looking Ahead

With most of its infrastructure virtualized, the firm is now working to bring increased sophistication to the management of that infrastructure. “We’re engaging our TAM in a lot of conversations around cloud, mobility, automation and orchestration,” the IT director said. “There are a lot of technologies and a lot of possible paths to consider. Our TAM is helping us evaluate those—and when we make a decision, he’ll be helping us go forward.”

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