



## Top 5 Tips for Piloting VMware Horizon 6

### Deliver end-user services “at the speed of life”

VMware Horizon 6 extends the power of virtualization from the datacenter to the desktop. Its capabilities allow organizations to deliver unlimited access to end user applications and online services at lower costs, with better performance, and at unprecedented scale.

But for many of our customers, VDI (virtual desktop infrastructure) is new. Piloting new technology before a large-scale production deployment always makes sense, and particularly so in this case, when internal VDI familiarity and skills may be scarce. However, as routine as this step may be, we have observed that the process doesn't always go as smoothly as it could.

Here are five key tips, based on consultant experiences in hundreds of customer engagements, for creating pilots that successfully validate your Horizon 6 solution and set you up for an efficient production deployment, minimizing disruption and cost.

#### #1. Choose the right users for your pilot

One of the most valuable things you can do is pick the right users for your VDI pilot. Too often, for example, we see pilots tried out on an organization's IT department—that's not helpful for two reasons. First, when IT users encounter a problem with their virtual desktop, they can either fix it, or circumvent it, something a normal end user can't do. Second, although IT users may be one of your use cases, they certainly won't be representative of the majority of your users. Using executives, too, is problematic because for the same reason. Their workloads will be representative of the majority of your users, causing the results of your pilot to be skewed. Instead, try to engage with a set of end users who are truly representative of your ultimate use cases. If your users have a range of needs, try and match that spectrum in your pilot, too. And then, as you implement the trial run, make sure to capture frequent feedback from all users so that you can ensure that you are capturing and correcting issues as the pilot proceeds.

#### #2. Think about your pilot workload

Just as you need to pilot with real end users, you also need to pilot with real workloads. Using automated workloads can be great for testing theoretical scalability of your VDI environment, but during a pilot, you need to be validating end user functionality. Automated workloads can't validate the user experience. Instead, find workloads that are representative of the actual use cases for which you are designing VDI. Ideally, selecting a small subset of users from the targeted use cases to pilot your new implementation is the best way to get accurate and realistic results. Again, be sure to gather frequent end user feedback and analyze it to see how you can quickly address end user concerns, both technical and non-technical.

- #1 Choose the right users for your pilot
- #2 Think about your pilot workload
- #3 Have a solid support plan in place
- #4 Be prepared for road bumps and performance cliffs
- #5 Plan your next steps—and stick to the plan

Authored by:  
Michael Bradley

Senior Solutions Architect  
with VMware Technology  
Consulting Services

### #3. Have a solid support plan in place

It's surprising how often we see pilots put into action without the support that they need. Pilot users need the same level of support as other users, after all. So make sure that you have a support plan going in. Creating that support plan also helps ensure that your project team is actively supporting the pilot. Your desktop support team needs to be engaged here, too. This is an excellent opportunity to bring them onboard, and for them to learn how to support the new VDI implementation. Allowing your support team to be the first level of support frees the project team up to continue working on the remaining aspects of the VDI project. If the your desktop support team needs help, they can escalate to the project team when required. Remember: the project team still has a VDI project to complete.

### #4. Be prepared for road bumps and performance cliffs

Pilots inevitably hit road bumps and you need to both expect them and make plans for addressing them. You can avoid a fair number of issues simply by anticipating that they are likely to arise. Don't forget to test for bottlenecks (SAN Processors, Network, etc.), for example. And remember to test for scalability.

Performance cliffs, too—like moving from 50 users on a VMAX to 500—can be anticipated. And vendors can be engaged to help validate that their products will have the capacity and resources to handle the expected workloads. Additionally, you can consider which resources in an environment are most likely to be constrained and you can plan for expansion. A good rule of thumb here: look for the weakest link, and plan accordingly for its failure.

### #5. Plan your next steps—and stick to the plan

Sometimes we see groups stuck in what we call “perpetual pilot” mode, where the new platform has a limited number of users and never grows from there. That can happen for a number of reasons. Often, it's because requirements keep changing throughout the project. This frequently happens when assumptions are made about workloads, application sets, and use case parameters, and those assumptions are proven wrong during the pilot. Missing applications, poor performance due to unexpected workloads, and end user functionality are three of the most common areas where we see requirements change in the middle of a VDI project. Scope creep has a similar impact, particularly when scope of the project is not clearly defined and agreed upon by the project stakeholders. We frequently see new use cases added to a pilot after it has already started, extending the pilot indefinitely.

A pilot's key performance indicators also sometimes get changed mid-stream—it's much better to outline solid success criteria from the start and stick to them. Lastly, we often see pilots with no planned completion date. That can be a recipe for never moving on. Instead, clearly mark your “line in the sand” and set a specific date when your pilot will end and—ideally—when your full-scale implementation is set to begin.

#### Next Steps with VMware Technology Consulting Services

1. Ask about piloting services like Horizon 6 Accelerator, Horizon 6 Production Pilot and Horizon 6 Assess, Design and Pilot
2. Get more advice from our subject matter experts at our consulting blog: <http://blogs.vmware.com/consulting>

#### Get Educated

Learn more with VMware Education courses like:

- Horizon with View: Install, Configure, Manage [V6.0]
- Horizon with View Fundamentals [V6.0]
- VMware Learning Zone

#### Take the next step with VMware Technology Consulting Services

Our on-site VMware experts design and deploy solutions tailored to your specific environment that accelerate adoption of complex technologies, improve operations, and speed time to value.

Learn more about VMware Technology Consulting Services at: [vmware.com/services](http://vmware.com/services).

