



VMware Virtual Infrastructure Methodology Enables Russell Investment Group to Set up Scalable Lab Infrastructure

Assessment Provides Detailed Implementation Framework and Saves \$110,000



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

INDUSTRY: FINANCIAL SERVICES

RESULTS

- Were able to save \$110,000 in hardware costs
- Established clear metrics for success of project
- Eased deployment by carefully planning framework for project
- Defined adjustments necessary for a successful deployment

"Our business proposition to our clients is very strong. We've grown over the last 10 years and will continue to grow. The only way we can keep up on the technology side is to put tools like this in place so we're much more flexible, agile, and quicker to respond to our business needs."

Scott Gray, Systems Integration Manager
Russell Investment GroupV

Optimizing the Lab Environment

Russell Investment Group, a global investment services firm, offers goal-oriented investors a full range of tailored solutions. Russell advises clients on more than \$1.8 trillion in assets and delivers investment programs to more than 1,600 clients in 35 countries.

In an effort to maximize efficiency and streamline its processes, Russell's corporate IT department researched the latest technologies that would strengthen its infrastructure. One goal was to optimize provisioning in its labs, where servers were provisioned manually. Administrators had to go through a tedious standard process, which took at least four hours, to deploy each new server.

"We wanted to ease the way our labs were used so we could provision servers quickly and give people their project requirements sooner," says Scott Gray, systems integration manager for Russell. "The goal was to decrease our time to market for technology products as they move through our lab environment. We also wanted to create a multipurpose lab environment by doing more with less, making it easier to engage services."

Gray and his team discovered VMware technology and realized it would help them meet their goals. "It fit into our plan to maximize efficiency," says Gray. "We're trying to move forward with newer technology to tie everything together, giving us flexibility in the lab."

The Best Strategy for Maximum Agility

To ensure a smooth deployment, Russell used the VMware Virtual Infrastructure Methodology (VIM), a four phase approach to assess existing systems and applications, and used that knowledge to plan, build and manage its virtual infrastructure. The VIM is based on the experience and best practices encapsulated by the VMware Professional Services Organization, which has worked with global enterprises to implement solutions meeting a varied and demanding set of business requirements.

During the assessment phase of the project, Gray worked with a practice development manager from VMware and CGI, a third-party service provider, to work out what was needed to meet the company's goals. "Because VIM is an established methodology, we were able to identify the precise steps to take in deploying our virtual infrastructure, and establish the metrics we would use to measure the project's success."

The key to the assessment phase was understanding and documenting the company's needs. "Our VMware practice development manager understood where we wanted to go with VMware long term," Gray says. "We told him we wanted to move in a phased fashion, focusing on our lab first. The assessment identified what we needed to have in place for a successful deployment, versus what would just be 'nice to have.' For example, VMotion will be great to use further down the road, but we didn't have to worry about VMotion right off the bat."

The VIM assessment also proved useful when securing funding for the project. "It allowed us to build out our funding request with value statements and accurate numbers," Gray says. "It also validated many of our cost assumptions we had made initially, not just for VMware software, but for the entire infrastructure we're putting in place at the lab."

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The assessment uncovered a way to save \$110,000, cutting the budget by 36 percent. "We had planned on purchasing new systems to accommodate ESX Server," explains Gray. "Our VMware advisor saw that several of our boxes were significantly underutilized, so we used those instead. They were on the ESX Server hardware compatibility list, so with upgrades to the processors and connections to our SAN environment, they worked fine."

VMWARE VIM AT WORK

- Four phase process: assess, plan, build and manage
- VMware Technology: ESX Server
- Hardware: four 2-CPU HP DL 380 G2s, and two 4-CPU HP DL 380 G2s

"We immediately took \$110,000 out of the funding request," he says. "In a funding request that's \$300,000, that makes a big, big difference."

A Successful, Fast Implementation

During phase two, VMware worked with Gray to plan the specific details of the project. It included creation of a blueprint for the implementation and a VIM test plan for building the infrastructure. Using these tools, Gray and VMware VIP Partner Solutions-II were able to build the solution in one month. "We were ready to go when we did the implementation," he says. "Our detailed planning and the expertise of Solutions-II as our implementation partner made things go smoothly."

Mike Thompson, senior account manager for Solutions-II, says the VIM Assessment was valuable for the implementation because it helped Russell Investment Group maximize its VMware investment. "Russell was able to use the VIM results to make decisions that will positively affect its business," he says.

Gray adds that he is looking forward to expanding the company's virtual infrastructure. "This software is a transformational technology that is going to allow us to move in a completely different direction, helping us become more responsive and enabling fast growth," he says. "Our business proposition to our clients is very strong. We've grown over the last 10 years and will continue to grow. The only way we can keep up on the technology side is to put tools like this in place so we're much more flexible, agile, and quicker to respond to our business needs. We just can't do it with anything else."

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