



“With VMware vSphere, our IT organization is now delivering a much higher level of service to the entire global enterprise – and we wouldn’t have gotten to this point so quickly or efficiently if it hadn’t been for VMware Professional Services.”

– Rob Jones
Director of Technology for
Northern Europe, Alstom

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Challenge

- Complete a successful upgrade to vSphere™ 4 with no business disruption as part of company drive towards 100% virtualization

Solution

- VMware® Professional Services Assessment, Plan and Design and Consolidation Services
 - Capacity Assessment
 - Health Check using VMware HealthAnalyzer
 - 2-week evaluation and performance measurement of VMware vSphere
 - 8-week Operational Readiness Accelerator
 - ITIL-based, VMware vSphere operations process review
- VMware Technical Account Manager
- Onsite VMware Resident Consultant
- VMware vSphere 4 Upgrade Planning and Deployment

The Results

- Speeded Alstom’s upgrade to VMware vSphere 4 to just six weeks
- Consolidated 21 instances of VMware vCenter down to six
- Enabled employees to provision a new virtual machine in as little as 30 minutes.
- Established operating test environment to prove infrastructure ability to handle large workloads
- Fast, easy access to product experts around the globe to quickly resolve technical issues

VMware Professional Services keeps transportation manufacturer on track for 100 percent virtualization

VMware Professional Services provides product expertise, hands-on assistance, and technical knowledge to help Alstom upgrade to VMware vSphere 4 quickly, around the globe

Alstom is a leading, global manufacturer of transportation and energy infrastructure equipment. The company’s transportation division builds everything from commuter trains and locomotives to signaling equipment and rail infrastructure. Alstom’s power division manufactures boilers, turbines, air quality systems, generators and controls for coal, gas, hydroelectric and nuclear power generation. Alstom employs more than 80,000 people in 70 countries, and recorded sales of \$26.7 billion in 2008.

A VMware customer since 2002, Alstom decided in early 2009 to upgrade to VMware vSphere 4 and enlisted the help of VMware Professional Services. VMware consultants worked closely with Alstom’s IT staff to provide hands-on assistance and technical expertise—frequently connecting Alstom with VMware developers and other experts around the globe. Today, Alstom is running VMware vSphere 4 throughout its organization and working with a VMware Technical Account Manager to drive toward 100 percent virtualization with VMware products and solutions.

VMware upgrade experts maximize speed, minimize risk

After setting a long term goal of 100 percent virtualization, Alstom decided to focus first on increasing the raw capacity of its virtualization technology to support its largest workloads. The company also sought to automate the common tasks associated with managing a virtual infrastructure.

“As a large global organization, we were constantly testing the performance limits of our virtualization technology,” recalls Rob Jones, Director of Technology for Northern Europe, Alstom. “We knew that if we were serious about increasing our virtualization rates—which ranged from 30 to 76 percent depending on the country—we would need to move our most resource-intensive tasks onto VMware and manage them more efficiently.”

Alstom began to evaluate VMware vSphere 4, the industry’s most reliable virtualization platform. Jones appreciated new, time-saving features such as VMware Host Profiles, VMware Storage vMotion and VMware Fault Tolerance. He wanted to ensure a successful upgrade with no business disruption, so Alstom reached out to VMware Professional Services.

“We were convinced of the value of VMware vSphere 4, but wanted to make sure we could get there quickly with as little risk as possible,” Jones explains. “VMware Professional Services helped us do just that. Working with their experts, we got the product expertise, technical knowledge and hands-on assistance we needed to upgrade to vSphere 4 around the globe.”

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

VMware at Work

- VMware vSphere™ 4 Enterprise Plus, featuring:
 - VMware Storage vMotion™
 - VMware Host Profiles
 - VMware vCenter™ Orchestrator
 - VMware vCenter Server Linked Mode
 - VMware vNetwork Distributed Switch
 - VMware Fault Tolerance (FT)
- VMware vCenter Server Standard
- More than 80 virtual machines on 6 ESX® 4 hosts
- Business-critical applications, including Lotus Notes Domino servers, Blackberry Enterprise servers, clients for desktop infrastructure, domain controllers, Oracle databases and Citrix

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VMware consultants began the professional services engagement by working onsite with Alstom’s IT team to kick-start the project, sharing product knowledge, connecting Alstom to experts within the VMware organization, and planning Alstom’s upgrade to VMware vSphere 4.

Before going live, Jones was eager to test the performance of Alstom’s upgraded virtual infrastructure. The VMware consultants assisted in setting up a test environment in which Alstom initially upgraded six hosts to VMware vSphere 4. There, Alstom gauged the performance of core business applications such as Lotus Notes Domino servers, Blackberry Enterprise servers, and clients for desktop infrastructure, domain controllers, Oracle databases and Citrix Terminal Services.

“With the help of our VMware consultants, we used a test environment to confirm the satisfactory performance of all of our critical business applications before going live with VMware vSphere 4,” Jones explains. “We quickly discovered that vSphere gave us the raw capacity we were looking for. Knowing this ahead of time gave us peace of mind that the upgrade would be a success—and it has been.”

A faster, better global upgrade

To meet Alstom’s geographic needs, VMware leveraged its network of consultants from around the globe. “Many of VMware’s developers are based in the U.S., and I initially feared that due to time zone differences, it might be difficult to get the answers we needed,” says Jones. “But our consultants from VMware Professional Services had no trouble tracking down the right people and getting prompt and accurate answers to our questions. Dealing with the VMware organization was a seamless process.”

“During the most challenging parts of the upgrade, our consultants called on a support engineer in Cork, Ireland,” recalls Jones. “His input was critical to keeping the project running on schedule. It was obvious that VMware was willing to make its entire organization available to us so that our upgrade would succeed.”

Results

Just six weeks after launching the engagement with VMware Professional Services, Alstom had finished upgrading its headquarters to VMware vSphere 4.

“By upgrading to VMware vSphere 4, we consolidated 21 instances of VMware vCenter Server down to six,” Jones concludes. “We gained the tools to manage our infrastructure more efficiently, and enabled our employees to provision a new virtual machine in as little as 30 minutes. The bottom line is that with vSphere, our IT organization is now delivering a much higher level of service to the entire global enterprise – and we wouldn’t have gotten to this point so quickly or efficiently if it hadn’t been for VMware Professional Services.”

Alstom continues to work with their VMware Technical Account Manager to complete the global rollout of VMware vSphere 4, moving closer to 100 percent virtualization. By the end of the project, Alstom will have achieved a significant transformation—enabled in large part by VMware Professional Services.

“When you’re embarking on a global upgrade of this magnitude, the best motto is, ‘Proceed With Caution,’” says Jones. “But on the other hand, we were eager to start reaping the benefits of VMware vSphere 4. Working with VMware consultants definitely resulted in not only a faster upgrade, but a better-conceived one.”

