MEDIA/ENTERTAINMENT

Tampa Bay Rays

"Now that we've virtualized our infrastructure with VMware solutions, everything runs much more smoothly. We're saving time, money, and man hours, and establishing a true disaster recovery plan to protect our operations."

— Juan Ramirez,
Senior Director of Information Technology,
Tampa Bay Rays

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Challenge
One-to-one replacement of aging physical servers was too expensive and made it difficult to develop a comprehensive disaster recovery strategy

Solution
VMware software offers the opportunity to create a virtual infrastructure that reduces overall costs while increasing manageability, performance, availability, and disaster recovery.

VMware at Work
VMware Infrastructure 3, featuring:
- VMware ESX®
- VMware vMotion™
- VMware Distributed Resource Scheduler (DRS)
- VMware High Availability (HA)

VMware vCenter™ Site Recovery Manager

Deployment environment
- Hardware: Dell PowerEdge R805 and HP Proliant DL385 servers with EMC NS20 storage array
- Guest operating systems: Windows 2003, Windows 2008, Windows 7, Red Hat Linux, CentOS
- Virtualized production applications: SQL Server 2005, SQL Server 2008, Microsoft Exchange 2003, Microsoft Exchange 2008, Microsoft Great Plains 10.0, Microsoft SharePoint, Blackberry Enterprise Server

The Tampa Bay Rays are a Major League Baseball team based in St. Petersburg, Florida. In addition to the baseball players, the organization has approximately 230 employees. The IT department is responsible for a wide array of services, ranging from the email and business applications that keep the organization running, to the team's graphics and media-heavy web site.

When approaching a hardware refresh cycle, the IT department saw an opportunity to streamline their IT operations. "We had around 60 to 70 physical servers that needed to be replaced," says Juan Ramirez, senior director of information technology at Tampa Bay Rays. "They were out of warranty and had high maintenance costs. We decided virtualization would be a more cost effective approach than doing a one-for-one replacement."

VMware products provided an ideal solution for the group's virtualization efforts. "We looked at Citrix XenServer and Microsoft Hyper-V but decided to go with VMware," says Ramirez. "VMware is the leader, and they've been around the longest. Also, we knew that whatever virtualization application we went with would have to play well with our existing infrastructure—so, the wide range of vendor support for VMware was very important to us."

The new infrastructure has enabled the Rays to run critical IT services on VMware Infrastructure, enhancing performance and availability. Additionally, the Rays deployed VMware vCenter Site Recovery Manager for another layer of reliability in their operations and disaster recovery strategy. "Site Recovery Manager was like a gift from heaven," says Ramirez. "We now have a true disaster recovery plan in place. We're secure, we're protected, and we know it works—it's just made life a lot easier for us."

Results

- Virtualize 70 percent of infrastructure. "We're working towards having up to 90 percent virtualized by the end of 2010," says Ramirez.
- Reduce planned downtime. "Before virtualization, if we undertook server maintenance and restarted machines due to an issue involving one service, users would not be able to access other services," says Ramirez. "Now, we can manage patches and upgrades including multiple server restarts in isolation without affecting the availability of other services. This has reduced planned downtime by 95 percent."
- Reduce disaster recovery time by 97 percent. "Our RTO used to be 24 hours minimum," says Ramirez. "Right now, we can offer less than an hour, which is amazing. This means that we can continue to support our users with minimal interruption even if our IT is impacted by a disaster."
- Reduce server replacement costs over three years by 75 percent. "With VMware, we now save $50-90k per year in hardware expenses alone," says Ramirez.
- Increase CPU utilization by a factor of eight. "Our average CPU utilization used to be 10 percent," says Ramirez. "Now, it's closer to 92 percent."
- Reduce power and space requirements. "By virtualizing 70 percent of our server infrastructure, we've cut our energy consumption by 20-30 percent and eliminated the need to seek new datacenter space," explains Ramirez.
- Reduced server deployment time. "The fact that we reduced the server deployment time from days to hours means we're saving man hours which we can use for other tasks," says Ramirez.

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CUSTOMER SNAPSHOT

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