



VMware Case Study



AmBank Group

AmBank Group modernizes IT infrastructure with VMware

Industry

- Financial Services

Location

- Malaysia

Key Challenges

- Legacy infrastructure was costly, and difficult to maintain and sustain
- Long hardware procurement processes hindered business growth
- IT administrators were engaged in mundane tasks

Solutions

- vCloud Suite Enterprise
 - vSphere Enterprise+
 - VMware vCenter Server
 - VMware Site Recovery Manager
 - VMware vRealize Operations
 - VMware vRealize Business for Cloud
- VMware NSX®

The deployment of VMware solutions has empowered AmBank Group to modernize its IT infrastructure from one that comprised of a hotchpotch of legacy systems that was costly, complex and difficult to maintain, to a software-defined data center that is highly efficient, agile and responsive to business needs. As a result, the bank has been able to accelerate delivery of digital banking services, as part of its efforts to stay at the forefront of digital innovation.

AmBank Group (AmBank) is one of Malaysia's premier financial institutions that offers a wide range of conventional and Islamic financial products and services. Besides being the first in Malaysia to offer a retail, office and hospitality real estate investment trust (REIT), it is also a global pioneer in issuance of Islamic residential mortgage-backed securities and has received recognition for outstanding corporate governance.

The Challenge

AmBank is always looking at innovative ways of growing its business in a sustainable manner. Doing so would require an agile approach in delivering IT services to support the needs of AmBank's business, such as enhancing the bank's digital banking capabilities and services to better engage with customers.

For years, AmBank faced challenges with its legacy IT Infrastructure that delivered services based on the traditional – and costly – “rack and stack” model, where a growing number of physical servers were added over time to keep up with the rising demands of its business. Provisioning new servers, however, took up to 12 weeks due to lengthy procurement and approval processes, slowing the business down. To mitigate against inaccurate forecasts of hardware requirements and potential performance bottlenecks, AmBank often deployed higher-capacity hardware, which may not always be needed.

With a massive server sprawl and cable crawl, it did not take too long before the bank hit the physical and power limits of its data centers resulting in potential power outage issues. Managing a large fleet of systems, which were constantly being upgraded, refreshed and decommissioned, was in itself an extremely complex exercise. Making matters worse was the fact that some legacy systems that were no longer meeting the needs of the business have not been decommissioned, further straining IT resources needed to support and maintain access to those systems. The lack of automation in IT provisioning also meant that IT administrators were often engaged in mundane tasks, rather than spending time on more pressing issues.

The Solution

To ensure a quick fix to its growing networking issues, AmBank created containment and consolidation strategies. The strategies immediately helped AmBank limit the physical growth of systems required to support its business, while enabling consolidation moving legacy systems to a completely virtual environment using VMware technology.

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"VMware's technology has enabled AmBank's group IT to extend its capability in helping and accelerating the bank's business.



Having the agility to provision IT services quickly through a software-defined data center is crucial to AmBank, which is evolving its business to become a truly digital bank that delivers next-generation banking services."

Charles Tan, CIO, AmBank Group

Business Benefits

- Improved business efficiency
- Increased employee productivity with fewer support staff
- Improved resource utilization
- Improved business continuity
- Reduced recovery time
- Improved network performance and visibility for smoother auditing

VMware Footprint

- VMware vSphere Enterprise Plus
- VMware vCenter Server 5 Standard for vSphere 5
- VMware vCenter Server Heartbeat
- VMware vCenter Operations Management
- VMware vCloud Networking and Security
- VMware Site Recovery Manager
- VMware NSX®

Applications Virtualized

- Rentas
- Card management system
- Internet banking
- HR applications
- Email Exchange

Platforms

- HP
- EMC
- Veritas
- Palo Alto Networks
- Cisco
- F5

Partner

- IGSB

AmBank deployed a range of VMware solutions including VMware vCenter Server, vCloud Suite Enterprise VMware NSX® and VMware Site Recovery Manager. It has since virtualized systems that were not mission-critical which include the development, testing and staging of servers, as well as end-of-life servers, reducing its physical server footprint by 60%. Its IT infrastructure now comprise of nine clusters that power some 150 applications running on 800 virtual machines.

To automate its disaster recovery processes, the bank turned to VMware Site Recovery Manager (SRM) to perform frequent non-disruptive testing and ensure IT disaster recovery (DR) predictability and compliance. For virtual infrastructure capacity planning and monitoring, as well as IT chargeback capabilities, AmBank deployed VMware vRealize Operations Management and VMware vRealize Business Standard, respectively. According to Denis Thomas, VP, IT Strategy Planning, Architecture and Transformation Projects at AmBank Group, the decision to turn to VMware for each of these solutions was clear, as VMware technologies are proven and are being used by other companies in the Malaysian financial industry. This further directed the business units to tap on the bank's virtual infrastructure when implementing new projects.

Business Results & Benefits

With VMware's plethora of virtualization solutions, AmBank has managed to consolidate its servers from six data centers previously, to just two. Not only has this reduced infrastructure cost by 24 times (with a host-to-VM ratio of 1:24), it has also shortened the time it takes to provision services and servers to under a week, translating to quicker turnaround time for new projects.

Through automation and centralized management of AmBank's virtual infrastructure, the bank's group IT is now able to operate with fewer support staff. Technology has enabled the bank's IT administrators to be more productive - they can troubleshoot issues faster, spend less time in the data centers and focus more on critical issues.

Keeping critical systems up and running at all times is essential to Malaysian financial institutions. With VMware's SRM, AmBank is now able to trigger recovery across data centers without the need for IT administrators to manually kickstart the Data Recovery (DR) process - resulting in less human errors and faster provisioning. Virtualization has enabled AmBank to achieve business continuity and reduce its recovery time objective (RTO). In addition, it has enabled full visibility of its DR capabilities to bank auditors, paving the way for a smoother auditing process.

The move to a virtual infrastructure with a smaller hardware footprint has helped AmBank reduce its utility costs as well. With the elimination of inefficient servers and the use of green IT components, cost reduced to a third. AmBank's group IT is turning itself into a profitable business unit, thanks to its ability to charge other business units for the use of IT resources.

Looking Ahead

With the virtualization of its computing resources in place, AmBank will be looking at network virtualization as the next step in its journey towards a software-defined data center. It also plans to extend virtualization to mission-critical applications, such as its core ATM switch which will be running on its virtual stack powered by VMware. "That's a big shift for an application that used to be on the mainframe," said Charles Tan, CIO, AmBank Group.



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