



EBRC LAUNCHES CLOUD PLATFORM USING VMWARE vCLOUD DIRECTOR SOLUTION AND ADDS 20% MORE CLIENTS



INDUSTRY
IT INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

LOCATION
LUXEMBOURG CITY, LUXEMBOURG

KEY CHALLENGES

- Expand beyond traditional data center hosting into cloud services.
- Select a cloud platform that can meet compliance requirements and support growth.
- Offer services and a buying process that appeal to smaller clients.

SOLUTION

EBRC deployed a new solution powered by VMware vCloud Director cloud management, exposing resources via the standard portal. EBRC added custom security features and offers clients additional load balancing, security, and managed services.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Grew cloud business to account for 20 percent of client base with little staff increase
- Provided cost savings, agility, simplicity, and faster time-to-market for clients
- Established regular cadence of adding new services to power continued growth

EBRC, a data center and managed services provider in Luxembourg, decided to start a new business unit offering virtual cloud resources. The company chose VMware vCloud Director® cloud management to power a platform that would overcome the constraints of Luxembourg's highly regulated environment. Today, 20 percent of EBRC's clients are new cloud clients that enjoy the cost savings and faster time-to-market the service provides; and EBRC continues to add new service enhancements to sustain constant growth.

EBRC, European Business Reliance Centre, is a leader in the integrated business of data center, cloud, and managed services, including IT transformation and security services. EBRC has 17,000 square meters of data center space in three state-of-the-art facilities and offers European Union-compliant services for the Western European market. The company works closely with its clients to provide tailor-made solutions that fit their specific needs with a collaborative approach from assessment to deployment.

The Challenge

Yuri Colombi, head of solutions and innovation at EBRC, has known for a decade that cloud business growth would eventually outpace the company's traditional data center business. EBRC was succeeding in a niche market by providing the highest quality services, but smaller clients found it challenging to afford a private room in the data center. Colombi says that the company knew it was losing segments of the market because EBRC's contracts were long-term and sometimes involved a lengthy client decision cycle. "We were facing a market where the number of clients was limited, and we wanted to grow," he explains.

Back in 2010, Colombi conducted a survey of the Luxembourg market to determine if interest in cloud services justified an expansion into the cloud. At the time it didn't, due to the challenges of implementation and problems with acceptance of virtual resources by Luxembourg regulatory agencies. But two years later, the situation had changed. "We saw that with a trusted cloud solution, we could start winning clients," says Colombi, "so we had to figure out the services our clients needed and the solution that would work best for us."

“In just a few years, the vCloud Director solution allowed us to sign a lot of new clients that we would have never seen without it.”

YURI COLOMBI
HEAD OF SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATION
EBRC

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware vCloud Director
- VMware vSphere

PLATFORM

- Cisco UCS blade servers
- Dell EMC storage
- Dell EMC Avamar backup software
- F5, Fortinet, Check Point, and RSA security software

The Luxembourg economy is primarily organized around finance, insurance, media, and government institutions, highly sensitive markets that require superior security, privacy, integrity, and regulation. Colombi needed a cloud solution capable of satisfying these requirements as well as Luxembourg’s highly regulated environment. He also wanted to select a platform with a roadmap of service enhancements to support continued growth.

The Solution

After evaluating the available options, EBRC chose vCloud Director cloud management to power its new solution and hired a VMware consultant to design and help launch it. “Five years ago, we knew how to sell and execute on managed services, and we were VMware users and experts in virtualization,” explains Colombi. “But launching a virtual data center service was completely new to us, so we relied on VMware support to architect the system, including how to meter, sell, and bill the services.”

Branded as TrustedCloudEurope, EBRC’s solution uses the vCloud Director platform on top of VMware vSphere® virtualization, exposing resources via the vCloud Director standard portal. Colombi’s team also added some security services to the portal so no one can misuse resources, and clients can work with their own resources by using the vCloud Director Edge Gateway firewall. On top of the vCloud Director-powered Infrastructure-as-a-Service - service, EBRC also offers additional load balancing, security, and managed services.

It took EBRC four months to design and deploy the new cloud offering. Before the company began selling the new service, EBRC gave a presentation to Luxembourg’s compliance body to ensure that it would approve the solution in case of audit. The new service received a green light from the regulators, and one month later, TrustedCloudEurope’s first client was on board.

Three levels of service are available to clients based on disaster recovery, high availability, and continuity needs.

Business Results & Benefits

“The vCloud Director offering appeals to clients because it gives them faster time-to-market, it is easy to use, and it makes business continuity and disaster recovery simple,” says Colombi. The offering provides easy entry with short-term contracts that are attractive to the SMB market EBRC was targeting. This has enabled EBRC to grow its cloud business to now account for 20 percent of the company’s client base, with 90 percent of these clients being new pure cloud clients. “In just a few years, the vCloud Director solution allowed us to sign a lot of new clients that we would have never seen without it.”

Once launched, the solution was easily managed by existing EBRC staff. EBRC was already using VMware products, and the service provider’s virtualization team saw managing the vCloud Director platform as just another workload. According to Colombi, “It is simple, not a big deal, and we didn’t have to hire new people for the storage or virtualization teams.” Because EBRC provides training as part of client onboarding, it only marginally increased the workload of system engineers to handle the new clients.

Colombi says the new clients are pleased. “The solution provides them cost savings and agility. Instead of weeks to purchase, configure, and secure hardware, clients get to market much quicker,” in a matter of days or less. Colombi also says that the learning curve for the vCloud Director portal interface is very quick, and cloud clients generally have no need for a virtualization specialist and require fewer system and security engineers compared to a non-cloud solution.

Colombi believes EBRC’s cloud business will grow to account for 30 percent of the company’s client base in a few more years. “The challenge for us is to continue to bring new services into the cloud and provide new value to clients. If we don’t keep evolving our solution, we’ll stall, so the increasing functionality that vCloud Director regularly delivers to us is essential.”

Looking Ahead

Recently, EBRC started a new project, collaborating with VMware to enhance its vCloud Director platform to provide an easy-to-implement hybrid cloud solution. Both VMware Virtual SAN™ virtualized storage and VMware NSX® virtual networking are on the roadmap for deployment in the coming quarter. In addition, Colombi is evaluating a new production-ready enterprise container solution, VMware vSphere Integrated Containers™, for deployment later in the year.

