



Flushing Bank Eliminates Data Security Risks and Simplifies Desktop Management with VMware Horizon

Flushing Bank needed more robust security for the customer data on its employees' desktop and notebook PCs. To eliminate potential data loss from a compromised client system, the bank implemented a desktop and application virtualization solution based on VMware Horizon®. By moving all storage and processing of customer data to a protected data center environment, the bank increased security, improved the user experience, simplified client system administration, reduced costs, and streamlined its desktop management.

Flushing Bank is a New York state-chartered commercial bank that serves consumers, businesses, and public entities with deposit, loan, and cash management services. The bank maintains 19 offices located in Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Nassau County and employs a workforce of 500. It also operates iGObanking.com, which offers competitively priced personal online banking products and services to consumers nationwide.

The Challenge

Flushing Bank needed a better way to secure the private customer information passing through its workers' desktop and laptop PCs. "Data loss is the worst scare for any banker," says Alexander Gellerman, vice president of systems infrastructure. "We carry so much personal information about our customers, and we need to make sure that data is as secure as possible. Losing any of it could easily finish the business. In particular, we needed to secure our desktops."

Gellerman and his team believed that a virtual desktop solution could enhance security by moving all data and processing off its client systems and into a protected data center environment. But the bank's list of requirements was long and exacting. A successful technology would need to accommodate three very different types of users:

- Tellers, who use a variety of peripheral devices at their workstations, including driver's license scanners, check scanners, and thermal printers, all of which would have to be supported
- Back-office desktop users who access personal data, files, and system settings
- Mobile users, who carry nonpublic information on their laptops

In addition, Flushing Bank wanted a successful virtual desktop solution to

- Reduce capital and operating costs
- Simplify IT infrastructure management and administration
- Provide an exemplary user experience for all personnel

INDUSTRY

Financial services

LOCATION

New York, New York

KEY CHALLENGES

- Reduce the risk of data loss from aging desktop and laptop PCs
- Reduce capital and operating costs
- Simplify IT infrastructure management and administration
- Provide an exemplary user experience for all personnel.

SOLUTION

Flushing Bank upgraded all branch-office desktop and mobile laptop PCs with virtual desktops based on VMware Horizon, Cisco UCS compute platform, and Nimble Storage.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Greater security for customer data
- Simpler desktop administration
- Versatile platform for infrastructure convergence
- Positive experience for all users
- Business continuity for banking desktops
- Exemplary product support

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- Alexander Gellerman,
Vice President of Systems Infrastructure,
Flushing Bank

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware Horizon

APPLICATIONS VIRTUALIZED

- Core banking applications
- Microsoft Windows and Office Suite

PLATFORM

- Cisco UCS
- Nimble Storage

The Solution

To directly compare the available technologies, Gellerman and his team ran parallel tests of solutions from Citrix, Microsoft, and VMware, followed by an 18-month pilot project with VMware Horizon. “The VMware solution was the key to resolving our desktop security concerns,” Gellerman says.

Based on the pilot results, the bank moved forward with a full-scale deployment of VMware Horizon running on a Cisco UCS server platform and Nimble Storage data storage solution. A primary data center provides virtual desktops for 150 concurrent users. A secondary data center provides an additional 150 floating desktops as an active reserve. All branch locations are connected via a new Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) network, and existing PCs were repurposed as thin clients.

Business Benefits

By virtualizing its desktop and laptop PCs with VMware Horizon, Flushing Bank realized a variety of operational and financial benefits.

Improved Security for Customer Data

By moving all data and processing off its client systems and into a protected data center environment, the bank eliminated the security risks associated with private data storage on branch-office desktops and mobile laptops.

Simpler Desktop Administration

Centralizing the execution platform for all its PCs has significantly reduced the work required for client system administration. Software updates and security patches are easily applied to desktop images in the data center. This ensures that all changes are successful and instantaneous and eliminates known vulnerabilities at all branch endpoints. “The ease of management of our new infrastructure is one of the very important benefits,” Gellerman says. “It makes our work way more pleasing than it used to be because everything is centrally managed... It’s almost automatic.”

Versatile Platform for Infrastructure Convergence

The VMware desktop virtualization solution that Flushing Bank has implemented also works seamlessly with its existing VMware server virtualization platform. Gellerman says, “We have created a fully converged infrastructure using a single platform from VMware and are now 95 percent virtualized.”

Positive Experience for All Users

User response to the virtual desktop transition has been overwhelmingly positive. “System performance is probably 10 times better than what they had observed before,” Gellerman recalls, and “when our users found a brand-new version of Windows 7 running on their desktops, they were very pleased.”

Business Continuity for Bank Desktops

By splitting the new virtual desktop platform across two new data centers, the bank gained a critical assurance of business continuity and disaster recovery. “We won’t have to close a branch in case our primary data center goes down,” Gellerman explains. “Our users will just grab another desktop from the other data center.”

Exemplary Product Support

While the transition to virtual desktops was a significant undertaking, exceptional support from VMware made the project manageable. “Our experience with VMware and Horizon has been predominantly positive,” Gellerman says. “It’s a great product, very solid, and the support is absolutely outstanding. You can always get a VMware engineer to help you with a task.”

Looking Ahead

With its desktops and servers almost fully virtualized, Gellerman believes the bank has the IT infrastructure it needs for future expansion. “We are planning to grow, and when you have virtualized your infrastructure, when you have virtual desktops and virtual servers running in your data center, you have the leverage to grow as far as you can grow,” he says. “This experience has been positive, and we are looking forward to more deployments with Horizon and other VMware products.”

