VISIANT
TECHNOLOGIES

INDUSTRY
Information Technology

LOCATION
Milan, Italy

THE CHALLENGES
The application requirements of a project called for a storage infrastructure upgrade, which would have required major investment in physical hardware and huge power consumption.

THE SOLUTION
VMware Virtual SAN™ provides hyper-converged, software-defined storage for virtual environments. The Virtual SAN architecture proved to be the right solution for Visiant, as storage and computing will be carried out in the same physical host with minimal overload.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS
- Drastically lower hardware investments compared to a physical SAN
- Reduced power consumption
- Granular and flexible vertical and horizontal scalability of storage environment, eliminating expensive overprovisioning
- Less maintenance and management compared to traditional infrastructure
- Lower OpEx with automation of storage operations

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Visiant Group, a market leader in Customer Operations in outsourcing, has offices in eight cities across Italy and has revenue of almost eighty million euros, with around 3300 employees. The Group is divided into three companies. Visiant Contact specializes in managing and developing contact center services. Visiant Next, which was founded after the acquisition of Fastweb's customer operation, specializes in organizing complex processes. Lastly, Visiant Technologies combines infrastructure and technological expertise and provides a real-time big data management and analysis offering, as well as cloud services to SMB customers. Technology solutions are provided by two data centers in Turin and Sesto San Giovanni, both highly reliable facilities, which, as colocation centers, host the systems of business customers and provide cloud services, such as IaaS, PaaS and SaaS.

Limit hardware investments, control power consumption

A customer, a new project, new storage services to be provided and the need to buy dedicated technology. This is how Gianfranco Baldinotti, CEO of Visiant Technologies, who has worked in the Internet Service Provider field for over ten years, begins his story. "We needed to carry out a software upgrade for a CRM application, which had rather strict requirements in terms of the database component," says Mr. Baldinotti. "The scenarios that we initially considered involved purchasing physical hardware and setting up a database, an inefficient solution with regard to controlling electricity consumption, because these machines are very power-hungry compared with the computation capacity they provide."

Capitalizing resources for large projects to benefit business infrastructure

The Visiant Technologies team therefore chose to deploy a cluster of virtual machines for the application database that needed to be set up. At this point there was a second challenge, linked to the need to make a major investment to scale up the business storage architecture. The necessary renewal of the SAN platform in a traditional way was not fully justified within the context of the project for the client, and the associated budget constraints were likely to be a barrier to the upgrade. Visiant needed to find a solution that was scalable without requiring a large investment, also because, in addition to serving large customers, Visiant serves a broad base of SMBs and the developed infrastructure could become a platform to provide services to this user base as well.

VMWARE FOOTPRINT
• VMware vSphere®
• VMware Virtual SAN

VMware Virtual SAN to simplify storage management

"We found the answer in the VMware Virtual SAN product, which enabled us to implement a dedicated cluster for the project with hardware that provides dual-level storage with solid-state drives," says Roberto Balestrieri, ICT Service Manager of Visiant Technologies. Virtual SAN is a policy-based storage product, designed specifically for vSphere environments, which simplifies and optimizes storage management and provisioning. With a VM-level storage policy, the system can dynamically and automatically meet requirements in line with underlying storage resources. "The configuration of the Virtual SAN has enabled us to start from basic storage availability that we have set up to be scalable, in a way that it is compatible with the availability of the computing and memory resources required to host other systems for other customers," continues Mr. Balestrieri.

Minimal capital expenses and operating expenses under control

"As an Internet Service Provider we have to pay attention to how we spend our money and I must say that VMware Virtual SAN has proven to be a very satisfactory product, which has changed our investment profile this year," says Mr. Baldinotti. "We are not forced to make major investments to buy a new physical Storage Area Network, and at the same time we are ideally positioned to provide services to our customers. Our service offering is also now more comprehensive as a result of implementing this system. VMware Virtual SAN has enabled us to limit capital investment while simultaneously giving us control over rising operating costs, as the virtual storage infrastructure gives us gradual and granular scalability."

With the Virtual SAN configuration they have implemented, Visiant Technologies can now implement both complex systems suited to the application requirements of large customers, as well as simpler services, such as mail servers or document sharing, for SMB customers. The scalability of the architecture enables service for both scenarios. In addition, Virtual SAN automates many manual storage activities, ensuring a more cost-effective operating model.

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