INDUSTRY
Government

LOCATION
Mansfield, Ohio

KEY CHALLENGES
- Richland Newhope wanted closer connections between its data center and remote locations
- The agency decided to replace its Citrix software with VMware Horizon™ View™
- The agency wanted virtualization expertise to help with the shift in technologies

SOLUTION
- Helped agency assess and implement the VMware solution
- Helped with a VMware upgrade and a change in server hardware platforms
- Provided ongoing access to VMware technical expertise

RESULTS
- Reduced risk in changing platforms
- Better understanding of how VMware technologies can help the agency
- Ability to "right-size" solutions with a clear upgrade path for the future

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Richland Newhope Engages VMware Technical Account Manager Services to Smooth Technology Transition and Move Ahead with Virtualization

Working with a VMware Technical Account Manager (TAM), the Richland Newhope government agency has created closer links across facilities, adopted new software and hardware platforms, and positioned itself to make the most of virtualization.

Richland Newhope is the developmental disabilities agency for Richland County in Ohio. Headquartered in Mansfield, Ohio, the agency has 10 locations, and supports more than 1,700 individuals and their families through group homes, therapy, transportation and various programs for children and adults.

The Challenge

Richland Newhope's data center supports the agency's remote locations and the case workers and consultants who work in those facilities and, increasingly, operate out in the community using mobile technology. The agency has used VMware technology for virtualized server operations for some time, and it wanted to create closer connections between the field and the data center—and to do so, it decided to use VMware View (now VMware Horizon™ View™).

Richland Newhope had been using Citrix software to provide remote access, but "our Citrix environment was getting outdated," said Shawn Martin, IT Professional at Richland Newhope. "So we were at a crossroads where we could either rebuild the Citrix infrastructure or start fresh with something else. Since we had made a commitment to VMware for our server infrastructure, it was a natural progression to go to View."

This move represented a significant change for the agency—and to help with the transition, Martin began working with a VMware Technical Account Manager (TAM).

The Solution

The TAM helped Richland Newhope understand how the virtual desktop technology could fit its needs and then helped implement the solution. With the solution in place, employees have been able to use desktop systems, laptops, tablets and even their own equipment at home to easily share information with the data center.

The TAM quickly became involved in other initiatives at Richland Newhope. For example, when the agency upgraded its vSphere environment, it took that opportunity to switch hardware as well, going from individual Dell servers to a Cisco Unified Computing System platform. "Our TAM took an active role in meeting with the vendor installing the Cisco environment so that we could understand the best practices involved in upgrading and installing vSphere on top of the new hardware," said Martin.

During this effort, the TAM also worked with VMware to provide Richland Newhope with a temporary expanded server environment to support the transition.

"Our TAM has proven to be very valuable in helping us get the right solutions, sized appropriately for our environment, while providing a clear upgrade path for future growth."

Shawn Martin, IT Professional, Richland Newhope

And as part of the shift, the agency also repurposed its Dell servers for use at its disaster recovery site—and the TAM helped ensure that the vSphere portion of the move went smoothly.

Beyond helping with such specific projects, the TAM has also provided advice and insight on a variety of questions as they come up. "There are things that you don't really need a technical support case for. We run some of those questions by our TAM," said Martin. "We tell him what we're thinking about doing, and he can tell us about best practices, what other people are doing in a similar situation or any potential issues he sees." If the TAM doesn't have the information at hand, he typically brings the appropriate internal VMware experts in to help.

Business Benefits and Results

Working with the TAM has benefited Richland Newhope in many ways— starting with reduced risk and increased confidence in moving to virtualized end user computing. "Any time that you make a decision to move from one vendor to another, like our move from Citrix to VMware, there are some reservations," said Martin. The TAM's ability to answer questions and transfer knowledge "helped us feel comfortable that it was definitely a good fit for us. And I think that we made the right decision."

Overall, the TAM has played a role in Richland Newhope's ability to make effective use of its VMware products. "We get a better understanding of the VMware product line and how it can impact our business," said Martin. Because the TAM knows Richland Newhope's environment and business needs, his input has

helped ensure that the agency gets the features and functions it needs without "overbuying." Martin said that "our TAM has proven to be very valuable in helping us get the right solutions, sized appropriately for our environment, while providing a clear upgrade path for future growth."

Looking Ahead

Richland Newhope plans to keep expanding its VMware footprint, starting with the increased use of Horizon View. The agency is also considering how VMware's Mirage and AirWatch products might fit into its environment. "We're going to rely on our TAM to understand not only our current infrastructure but also how to manage an increasingly mobile workforce," said Martin.

"Our TAM has been an integral part of the success of VMware and virtualization at our agency," Martin added. "As we continue to move forward, I feel that we will continue to use the TAM to make the right decisions at the right times."

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