THEKKING STREAMLINES IT SERVICE DELIVERY AND ELIMINATES BUSINESS RISK THROUGH NEW UNIFIED VMWARE SOLUTION

CUSTOMER
THEKKING

WEBSITE
WWW.THEKKING.IS

INDUSTRY
SERVICE PROVIDER

LOCATION
KÓPAVOGUR, ICELAND

KEY CHALLENGES
- Needed to consolidate a mixed-solution environment that included Hyper-V
- Too many tools for the same job – wished to streamline, cut costs, and simplify IT delivery
- Wanted to protect the management environment in the event of an outage in the production environment

SOLUTION
Installed vSphere with Operations Management to consolidate a mixed-solution environment into one unified system for faster problem-solving and vSAN to separate production workloads from management workloads reducing risks to the business.

BUSINESS BENEFITS
- Faster IT service delivery and troubleshooting for clients
- More stable production environment with improved uptime minimizing business risk
- Reduced capital and operational expenditure on production storage capacity and problem solving

The Icelandic IT service provider Thekking expended much resource managing large workloads in a multi-solution environment while also experiencing high costs related to the handling of multiple production clusters. The resulting fragmentation and lack of a protected management environment was time consuming when dealing with more customers, making it difficult to handle outage and back-up. By standardizing on vSphere 6.5 and vSAN 6.6, Thekking now handles workloads more efficiently thanks to a modern, high-performing server setup in a more stable business environment. Additionally, the new system has also streamlined the storage of client data, improving the overall customer experience.

Customer profile

Thekking is an Icelandic IT service provider offering hosting, communication, security and helpdesk services for Icelandic businesses, mainly in the retail sector. The customers range from smaller businesses to some of the biggest retailers in the country. The business is a leading local player in the Icelandic IT-industry with 70 employees based in Akureyri in Northern Iceland and in Kopavogur in the capital region. The name "Thekking" is the Icelandic word for "knowledge" – referring to the ambition of providing competent staff and services. Thekking runs two datacenters, one in Akureyri and one in Kopavogur.

Challenge

Thekking has many different customers from small business to large retailers with different challenges that all require different kind of services. Some need data storage solutions, some require a service provider to run their intranet, while others need help to manage servers and hardware on location or remotely.

With such an extensive portfolio of customers and diverse range of services, Thekking wasted resources by running different virtualization platforms resulting in too many tools for similar tasks, which made it impossible to manage systems and support efficiently. At the same time Thekking had trouble with migration between hosts and increasing costs of having multiple clusters, some of which were small and heavily utilized.

Another pressing issue was the risk related to not having a protected management environment to handle hardware breakdowns in the production environment. For instance, if a customer experienced downtime in the form of an outage, Thekking did not have an efficient management environment in place to quickly handle back-up and restore data. This meant that operations in the production cluster were easily interrupted resulting in more downtime for

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VMWARE FOOTPRINT
• vSphere Enterprise Plus 6.5
• vSAN 6.6 Standard
• Log Insight 4.0
• vRealize Operations Management 6.6

PARTNER
• Arrow ECS Denmark A/S

clients. At the same time, the support team was not provided with a full overview of the situation, having to deal with several systems.

Ultimately, many resources were spent fixing crashes manually instead of just solving problems on the spot. This issue needed to be solved to make the solutions more time-saving and cost-efficient for Thekking and its customers.

The Solution

Thekking needed to consolidate a mixed-solution environment that included Microsoft's Hyper-V. As Thekking searched the Icelandic market for possible solutions to their challenges, they quickly realized there was no alternative to what VMware could supply. VMware is the only company to offer a stable solution with proven technology on a reliable platform. VMware's extensive ecosystem and tools also matched Thekking's existing skillset well and was an important factor when it came to choosing the right platform.

"We decided to invest in VMware's vSphere with Operations Management (vSOM) Enterprise Plus 6.5 and vSAN 6.6 to standardize our systems and completely remove our existing Hyper-V solution. With the new solutions installed in both our datacenters, we are able to provide a unified platform for all workloads and storage with easy management and reduced costs as a direct consequence," explains Marteinn S. Sigurðsson, Infrastructure Architect at Thekking.

Today, all Thekking's 700 VMs are running on vSphere with 95% of their servers virtualized, which has helped integrate the many different systems they previously ran for their customers. With vSphere, Thekking also has access to Log Insight to easily monitor VMs and hardware, as well as vRealize Operations Management for environment right sizing and capacity planning. The new solution also makes it possible to run scripts on just one system.

With vSAN a management cluster has been created that helps Thekking run vCenter as well as several other infrastructure applications to handle monitoring, backup and storage. In case of an outage, vSAN also provides stable protection for management, making it possible to help customers immediately.

Business Results and Benefits

By consolidating multiple platforms into one combined VMware vSphere platform, Thekking now deliver their services through a single system, providing them a full overview of all events. Thekking's small IT team now have access to a streamlined environment which requires less administration, and accelerates service delivery and troubleshooting. When customers call to inquire about an issue, Thekking only needs to consider and consult one platform giving them and their clients a much better understanding of what action is needed.

"Log Insight is a good example of a feature that really delivers concrete benefits. In one situation, a sysadmin could access vSphere's Log Insight from home, where they have a full overview of events on their VMs and hardware. The sysadmin was able to fix the problem themselves in just 10 minutes, something that could have taken hours before," says Marteinn S. Sigurðsson, Infrastructure Architect at Thekking.

The successful separation of production workloads from management workloads through the new vSAN solution has also substantially reduced the risk for the business if an outage happens, thanks to the two functioning clusters. If retailers are experiencing any kind of breakdown in inventory or other hardware systems in the production environment, the management system kicks in storing data for backup, which can be retrieved from the front-

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end. Together with the improved performance and availability supplied by the new management cluster, this has provided Thekking with a broad range of improvements.

"Compared to the previous setup, our customers now experience significantly fewer interruptions, a much faster response time in our IT delivery and a more powerful and stable system with better visibility. At the same time, we have also reduced both capital and operational expenditure on production storage capacity, problem-solving and troubleshooting, benefitting our clients and improving our business results."

Looking ahead

Building on the success with the new platform, Thekking hopes to begin automating more workloads to make sure that every implementation of services is carried out in the most consistent and efficient way possible. On top of this, Thekking also expects to conduct a proof of concept on VMware's NSX to facilitate high-end networking and micro-segmentation between the different VMs in the future.

The improved customer satisfaction has also boosted confidence in the sales department who foresee more customers will invest in their own datacenters and integrate to Thekking's platform for enhanced stability.

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