



Increased storage speeds due to all-flash clusters have reduced backup time, and sped up the production of financial reports from seven hours down to three



During implementation, rack space was consolidated by 75%, from two racks down to half a rack



Less IT hosts are required on the new system which in turn has reduced the licensing cost, lowering CAPEX



A more secure infrastructure platform via vSphere Virtual Machine Encryption

Colin Biggers & Paisley Lawyers take strides in digital transformation with VMware vSAN

Colin Biggers & Paisley is an Australian legal practice, focused on delivering a full range of legal services to the insurance, construction, property and business services sectors in Australia.

Since its establishment in 1900, it has evolved from a boutique firm to a national legal practice with international reach. Following two mergers, Colin Biggers & Paisley's IT needs had evolved. With a lean IT team and a legacy core server and storage infrastructure, the practice needed a solution that would upgrade its current system and streamline processes, whilst also helping the business take the first step towards future plans to move to the cloud.

The Challenge: Outgrowing tired legacy system

Colin Biggers & Paisley had a legacy core server and storage infrastructure - a Cisco and EMC traditional three tier stack - in place which was six years old and at capacity. The system was cumbersome to manage and inflexible through the inability to add new services, or adapt to various uses. As the solution was coming towards its end of life, renewing and upgrading wasn't an option due to the costly maintenance and upkeep involved.

**COLIN
BIGGERS
& PAISLEY
LAWYERS**

INDUSTRY

Law

LOCATION

Brisbane, Melbourne & Sydney

KEY CHALLENGES

- Legacy core server and storage infrastructure which required costly updates and maintenance
- Outgrowing infrastructure capacity through company growth
- Needed a system which would prepare them for their goal of being 'cloud-first'

SOLUTION

Colin Biggers & Paisley Lawyers has partnered with VMware to implement VMware vSAN hyperconverged infrastructure. This was the logical step for the practice to build out its digital foundation, enabling a consistent architecture and operations to eventually transition to a multi-cloud environment with greater ease in the future.

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware vSphere
- VMware vSAN

“The system was just old. Even after two years it needed some upgrades which were costly – we were growing out of it already, so after six years we were ready to move on,” says Steven West, Systems Administration Manager, Colin Biggers & Paisley.

The practice’s long-term technology strategy involved the goal to drive a ‘cloud first’ initiative, however before they got there, they had to lay the foundations. “A lot of businesses were moving to the cloud and we felt we had to be there too, however we soon realised that it was naïve to think we could take a simple step to the cloud. Not only did we need to meet our immediate needs to quickly fill the void of our outdated system, but we soon realised that our cloud first strategy was going to be a longer-term goal. With that in mind, we were also looking to invest in a solution that would provide us with a solid foundation and that was a step in the right direction towards a cloud solution”.

To address these challenges, the practice approached Focus Group Technologies, a VMware Solution Provider and Hyperconverged Solution Competency Partner, to assess their situation and identify a solution that would not only update their system but also prepare them for their future in the cloud.

The Solution: Upgrade to hyperconverged infrastructure

The practice’s key priorities were to have a scalable, reliable and secure solution that was cost-effective and allowed real-time data visibility and analysis. As an existing VMware vSphere customer, Focus Group Technologies was able to offer a virtual health assessment through VMware, where they managed to identify a detailed inventory of their environment, including insight into the current performance requirements at peaks and lows. This was important to identify the most cost effective, scalable solution that provided real-time data over a period, as opposed to a point in time, allowing for future and predictable growth.

With the results of the virtual health assessment, Focus Group Technologies recommended hyperconverged infrastructure, powered by VMware vSAN, as the next logical step for the practice to build out its digital foundation. This would enable a consistent architecture and operations to eventually transition to a multi-cloud environment with greater ease in the future.

Working with VMware, Focus Group Technologies implemented vSAN, putting in a four-node vSAN cluster, based on Dell’s VxRail integrated appliance, in the head office. This reduced the current footprint from two racks down to half a rack. The project also involved deploying vSAN ROBO clusters, based on Dell PowerEdge vSAN Ready Nodes, in the remote offices. These flexible deployment options are all available to CBP under a single management framework based upon VMware vSphere.

“VMware through Focus Group were certainly seen to be offering the most mature solution in terms of technology. The great thing is that this is a one stop solution, built on hardware

that’s reliable. Also from a project management side it comes with the capability,” said Steven. “The pricing was also appealing as Focus Group helped us with training for the team as well, which showed they care about the solution. I don’t think we would have had the same experience with another vendor and implementation partner.”

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STEVEN WEST
SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION MANAGER, COLIN BIGGERS
& PAISLEY

The Results: Scalable system, performance improvements and reduced costs

Since implementation, the new VMware vSAN solution has revolutionised management of storage for Colin Biggers & Paisley. With its lean IT personnel resource, the practice has even been able to reduce the number of hosts needed on the system which in turn has reduced the licensing cost.

On top of this, not only has the physical space of the infrastructure been consolidated, with 75% consolidation from two racks down to half a rack, but the solution is a lot faster. Colin Biggers & Paisley have been able to see the backup time reduce significantly with the ability to run more virtual servers on the infrastructure than before.

“We’ve had some really amazing performance improvements around financial reporting. An average report has gone from taking seven hours to three hours on the new system,” said Steven.

Catering to the industry specifically, the vSAN solution can offer the critical IT capabilities that they need for their industry, such as document management, access and information. Given the sensitive nature of confidential legal work, Colin Biggers & Paisley can also be confident that its customer and employee data is secure, via vSphere Virtual Machine Encryption, leaving the team more time to focus on their work.

“As we look towards our goal of being ‘cloud first’ in the future, we’re thrilled to now have the robust infrastructure foundation to support this. With vSAN we now have a consistent architecture and operations to transition to a multi-cloud environment in the future,” said Steven.