Global Staffing Firm Delivers Superior Customer Experience with VMware

A leader in staffing and recruiting solutions wanted to deliver world-class customer experiences by fostering digital transformation. To propel business expansion globally while transforming the customer experience, the recruiting firm turned to VMware solutions for a flexible, more secure, cloud-ready environment capable of supporting the needs of the business.

The challenge

The recruiting firm's application team recently multiplied sixfold in a year, from 30 people to 180. With this, the IT infrastructure team needed to support a growing number of enterprise search software initiatives reliant on more efficient data mining, data warehousing, and resume searching.

The team wanted to help accelerate business innovation by promoting innovative strategies for DevOps, such as enabling a more open architecture for easier access and communications between applications. Given the firm's strategic assets, including its rich database of job candidates globally, the company sought to fortify its competitive advantage by enabling more efficient development of next-generation applications that leverage this information.

The IT team feared erosion of control and security by shadow IT projects that could emerge if its own resources could not keep up with business stakeholder needs. At the same time, protection of personal job candidate and employee data was a growing concern in the face of new compliance requirements such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe. The firm needed a better, more unified platform to address personal data security in a more holistic fashion.

To help drive business growth and support exceptional customer service, the company needed a more flexible IT infrastructure that could support internal demands with greater agility.

INDUSTRY
BUSINESS SERVICES

LOCATION
UNITED STATES

KEY CHALLENGES
- Increase agility of IT infrastructure to quickly meet business demands
- Fortify protection of personal data
- Enable more open architecture for easier access and communication between applications

SOLUTION
A leading global staffing and recruiting firm opted for a full stack of VMware solutions to deliver the agility, protection, and hybrid cloud capabilities it needed in an integrated platform.

BUSINESS BENEFITS
- Transformed infrastructure to more securely and rapidly support global business expansion
- Provided superior business intelligence and competitive advantage
- Delivered a world-class experience to employees, customers, and job candidates

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The solution

The recruiting firm opted for a full stack of VMware solutions to deliver the agility, protection, and hybrid cloud capabilities it required in an integrated platform. "We wanted to make sure we have a good framework so the application teams can come to us and use what we have," said an IT infrastructure team lead for the recruiting firm.

At the heart of the firm's modernized data center environment, VMware vSphere® 6.7 includes advanced security capabilities that are fully integrated into the hypervisor. Encryption at the virtual machine (VM) level safeguards data both in motion and at rest, helping the company comply with GDPR requirements. "The newer features of vSphere 6.7 help protect our environment better while also taking a lot of the load off some of the more mundane operational work," the infrastructure team lead said.

The environment fosters greater IT agility, including enhanced support for vSphere Integrated Containers™, so the firm can run container-based applications alongside existing VM-based workloads in production, without building a separate, specialized container infrastructure. The company uses VMware vRealize® Automation™, so authorized users can programmatically request infrastructure and application resources from any cloud to design and deliver VM- and container-based applications. vRealize Automation enables developers to work independently of IT by accessing environment and application resources on any cloud through an API, catalog, or CLI with lifecycle management.

To bolster security with flexibility for the hybrid cloud era, the solution empowers IT teams to maintain governance over multiple, underlying cloud resources, and also automate the delivery of multi-cloud environments and developer services through policies. This allows the recruiting firm to accelerate global delivery of IT services, providing greater agility for the company's development teams, while allowing frictionless oversight by the infrastructure team.

"No matter where you are around the world, you should be able to push a button and have infrastructure spin up on-premises. Couple that with our internal software teams moving to a DevOps model, everything is about speed, and vRealize Automation is helping us get there," said the infrastructure team lead.

To help keep its environment more secure and up to date, the firm leverages a VMware Technical Account Manager (TAM) along with VMware Skyline™. Aligned with VMware Global Support Services, Skyline automatically and more securely collects, aggregates, and analyzes product usage data to help VMware Technical Support Engineers proactively resolve potential problems. The company's team can log in to VMware Skyline Advisor, a self-service web portal, at any time to view proactive recommendations for protecting the environment. The Skyline Log Assist feature automatically (with customer permission) uploads log files to help Technical Support Engineers begin troubleshooting support requests and resolve issues more quickly. As a result, the recruiting firm avoids the labor-intensive process of manually uploading log file bundles, saving a substantial amount of time.

" We were able to cut a set of 225 tests from 17 hours to 1 hour after moving it to a vSphere Integrated Containers environment."

IT INFRASTRUCTURE TEAM LEAD

VMWARE FOOTPRINT
• VMware vSphere 6.7
• VMware Skyline
• VMware vRealize Automation Advanced
• VMware vSphere Integrated Containers
• VMware Enterprise PKS

APPLICATIONS VIRTUALIZED
Elasticsearch, Oracle PeopleSoft, Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle Hyperion, Sage BusinessWorks

PLATFORM
HPE 3PAR storage

Business results and benefits

The recruiting firm's IT environment has transformed to support the company's global expansion with greater agility, while fortifying security. "Skyline has been great from a security and a remediation standpoint. Having a portal that collects our data and flags issues for us has been extremely valuable. I'm not waiting for emails to come from our TAM or just doing quarterly patches anymore. I can log in and get a report every week to see where we are and what we need to address. I sleep better at night," said the infrastructure team lead.

The company's IT team can patch vulnerabilities rapidly with the vSphere Quick Boot™ feature, turning what was a 10-minute reboot and memory check of dense VMware ESXi™ hosts into a process of less than 2 minutes. "The past year has been particularly messy for zero-day exploits, so it's been great to be able to patch our clusters quickly and get the hypervisors back up five times faster with vSphere 6.7 and Quick Boot. Now we don't spend all day patching our big production clusters," the infrastructure team lead said.

The solution helps the IT team work more efficiently. Some of the new capabilities the team enjoys are a more functional user interface in HTML5, enhanced vSphere vMotion® to mitigate compatibility issues with some of its clusters, space reclamation with its Server Message Blocks (SMBs) leveraging VMFS 6 datastores, and more storage flexibility with vSphere Virtual Volumes™ and vSphere Replication™.

"With vSphere Virtual Volumes, you can use shared virtual machine disks instead of having to do raw device mapping. That's allowed us to start strategizing around using vSphere Replication, so we're no longer locked down to a certain hardware vendor when it comes to an SMB for our replication and disaster recovery. We can replicate to the cloud. It gives us a lot more options. It's tremendously faster," said the infrastructure team lead.

The firm is further accelerating IT operations with vRealize Automation. "Before, it would take four to eight hours to manually get a server spun up onto our monitoring and backup infrastructure, and set up with the right IP and networking information. Since we've moved to vRealize Automation, it's all done in 10 minutes, and it's absolutely fantastic," the infrastructure team lead said. "It's become a one-touch solution for us."

The company is leveraging the solution to shorten its product rollout cycles. The firm is using vSphere Integrated Containers to automate and accelerate user acceptance testing of its web apps with Selenium software for faster time to market. "We were able to cut a set of 225 tests from 17 hours to 1 hour after moving it to a vSphere Integrated Containers environment," said the infrastructure team lead.

The firm recently started a proof of concept for VMware Enterprise PKS to simplify the deployment and management of Kubernetes clusters at scale. The production-grade, Kubernetes-based container solution includes advanced networking, a private container registry, and full lifecycle management to help manage containers across private and public clouds. The team is particularly excited about the possibilities for VMware solutions using containers and Kubernetes with the ELK stack consisting of Elasticsearch, Logstash, and Kibana to efficiently deliver superior business intelligence.

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"My vision is to containerize our hefty Elasticsearch environment, which uses around 100 very large VMs with about 4 terabytes of RAM. With containers, we could probably cut that by half, if not more," said the infrastructure team lead. "I see that footprint shrinking immensely for major infrastructure savings, while still allowing us to provide the same high level of service to our internal customers and help drive competitive advantage."

With VMware solutions, the recruiting firm is deftly navigating its transformation to more of a software-defined business. "Next-gen applications we are developing to better leverage searching, connections, and insights based on our rich trove of job candidate and business data will help provide world-class experiences for employees, job candidates, and customers alike," the infrastructure team lead said.

Looking ahead

The recruiting firm anticipates using vRealize Automation and its integration with vRealize Code Stream™ to improve its continuous integration/continuous delivery (CI/CD) initiatives. With an automated release process at each stage of the software delivery pipeline, the team expects to enjoy faster and more consistent code releases. The IT team has also started to look at the possibility of using VMware Cloud™ on AWS for its virtual desktop and Oracle environments, as well as more generally for disaster recovery.