Accelerated time to market

Enhanced client and employee experience

Reduced operating costs

Migrated to future-proofed cloud platform

Making an 'Impossible' Cloud Migration Possible in the Financial Services Sector

Sterling National Bank ("Sterling") is one of the first traditional banks to fully embrace the public cloud. Working with VMware and Deloitte, the bank was able to exit two data centers within a year. Additionally, even with the limitations posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Sterling was able to implement a scalable, reliable, and secure platform and embrace other new technologies.

Describing itself as anything but ordinary, Sterling serves consumers and businesses. The bank is a nationwide player in digital banking and has a vision of being able to serve all clients anytime, anywhere, from any device.

Most organizations want to increase online access to their services, but the banking sector is often held back by legacy technology and stringent security requirements – not to mention a broad client base that includes a mix of digital natives and a generation more inclined to bank in person. Nevertheless, Sterling has a goal of onboarding 100 percent of new clients digitally, making it faster for clients, and less labor-intensive for staff – and with figures currently around 80 percent, it's not far off this goal.

But how did it get there?

The need for speed in the banking sector

Sterling is growing its client base at a rapid pace, balancing organic growth through the provision of new services and from previous mergers and acquisitions. This presents two challenges - continuing to develop and launch new products at scale which requires speed and agility, and how to cost effectively manage data storage. Both of these issues are solved with migrating to the cloud.

STERLING NATIONAL BANK

Sterling National Bank serves consumers and business owners across New York and the Hudson Valley regions, as well as providing nationwide specialty financial services. It strives to be a force for good in the community and the bank that does things differently.

INDUSTRY
Financial Services

**LOCATION**
New York, USA

ABOUT DELOITTE
Deloitte is a leading global provider of consultancy services and a VMware Principal Partner. It has approximately 330,000 employees across 150 countries worldwide.

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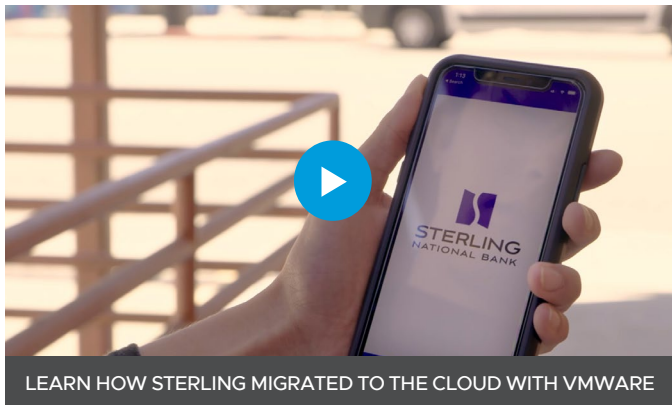
The bank decided it was time to end its use of on-premises data centers. "To bring our vision to life we needed to team up with the experts – we partnered with Deloitte to provide data center migration, disaster recovery, and cloud management services, and turned to our trusted partner VMware to supply the technology," recalls Frank Emma, Director of Systems Engineering and Technology at Sterling National Bank.

With the existing data center running on VMware vSphere®, migrating to VMware Cloud™ on Amazon Web Services (AWS) was a natural choice. As Emma comments, "When your current vendor offers more technology-driven solutions, why look anywhere else to take you to the next level?" Being able to use the same vendor for migration reduced the costs and risks usually associated with this type of project.

The Sterling and Deloitte team adopted a 'lift and shift' methodology to seamlessly migrate the whole environment from on-premises to VMware Cloud on AWS. Rehosting the same applications in the cloud helped to accelerate the migration.

"Our migration to VMware Cloud on AWS was so seamless that our users and application owners were unaware any changes took place. There was no downtime at all," adds Vesko Pehlivanov, Senior Managing Director, Solution Strategy & Architecture at Sterling National Bank. This was in part due to VMware HCX™, which ensured business continuity throughout the migration. Moving to the cloud couldn't have come at a better time with the COVID-19 pandemic. With the exception of the call center and financial centers, which remained open, the team was able to mobilize the workforce to a remote work environment in a matter of days with minimal disruption to end users. The cloud migration also meant the bank didn't need any on-site engineers working in the data centers.

Creating a scalable platform to accelerate time to market

The full VMware solution includes VMware Site Recovery Manager™ to ensure disaster recovery and VMware NSX-T™ Data Center to provide hybrid network connectivity, advanced security, and simplified operations in VMware Cloud on AWS.

NSX-T includes a host of networking and security services (for example, logical switches, logical routers, logical firewalls, and more), allowing virtual networks to be created and provisioned on-demand for workloads in VMware Cloud on AWS. The team can monitor the health and capacity of the environment using VMware vRealize® Operations™ to ensure it's highly functional and identify risks before they impact services.

Beyond providing a scalable platform at a lower cost than an on-premises environment, Sterling now has the foundation in place to continue to innovate. "We have more time and flexibility to develop and test new products and focus on research and development," comments Brendan Welter, Chief Security and Technology Officer at Sterling National Bank.

This also opens the door to the possibilities of robotics and AI, and the team has already built an AI-powered communications agent to help triage and route cases to the call center. The bot picks up 100 percent of new cases and is currently resolving 50 percent of them before passing the remaining, more complex cases to the support team. Meanwhile self-serve helps clients access banking services faster and improves their experience across all channels.

"What made an impossible project possible, was the amazing alliance between Sterling, VMware, and Deloitte – helping us amplify our strengths and move faster and more effectively than we could have done alone," concludes Emma. "Now that we're fully operating in the cloud, it's time for phase two: optimizing our network and transforming the employee experience."

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VESKO PEHLIVANOV
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR, SOLUTION STRATEGY & ARCHITECTURE
STERLING NATIONAL BANK

 Find out how **@SterlingNtlBank** became the first traditional bank to operate fully in the cloud with **#VMware**