



FAMILYMART CREATES NEXT-GENERATION CONVENIENCE STORES WITH VMWARE HORIZON

あなたと、コンビニに、 FamilyMart

INDUSTRY RETAIL

LOCATION JAPAN

KEY CHALLENGES

- Internet Explorer-based business applications were limited to only PCs onsite
- Off-site employees had to use laptops or printouts, creating potential security risks and limiting real-time access to data
- Company wanted to streamline off-site employees' work, which may cover large territories outside of the main office

SOLUTION

With iPads, Internet Explorer and VMware Horizon, off-site employees can now access business applications on-the-go, increasing motivation and productivity.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- IE-based business applications can be accessed from an iPad
- The use of an iPad expedites access to vital information and resources
- Off-site employees' work has been freed from location constraints

Since 2015, Japanese company FamilyMart has operated under their "Fun & Fresh" sales strategy while providing its customers with products of the utmost quality as it strives to create a "next-generation convenience store" experience. As part of this strategy, the development staff that create new stores and the supervisors that oversee the operations of existing ones play a vital role. Both of them spend the majority of their day out of the office, and are often forced to travel for extended periods of time to reach their destinations. If they needed to access internal web applications or data as part of their jobs, they had to use PCs that were slow to boot up and manage, placing even more constraints on their time. The company decided to use VMware Horizon® 6 as part of a change in its IT strategy. FamilyMart provided its employees with iPads so they could use the company's applications safely and securely, no matter where the employee was located, and improve their productivity and motivation.

FamilyMart is a leading convenience store chain known for its slogan, "FamilyMart, Where You Are One of the Family." Since 2015, FamilyMart has been committed to creating the ideal next-generation convenience store through a focus on the highest quality products as part of its "Fun & Fresh" marketing strategy. One of the company's objectives was to implement what they call a "work style revolution" among its off-site employees responsible for developing new stores and those supporting the operations of existing stores.

The Challenge

Supervisors use many business systems for worker attendance management and personnel evaluation systems, including ones for data analysis, accounting, and work manuals for stores' staff members. While most of these systems are web-based applications, there were some older ones that required the use of Microsoft Internet Explorer® 8. Therefore, those applications could not be used with Safari®, the standard web browser provided on iOS for the iPad. For security reasons, it was also necessary to limit the types of web browsers able to access FamilyMart systems and to prevent unauthorized data from being stored on devices.

“The usability and responsiveness of applications delivered via VMware Horizon provided a seamless experience for our web-based applications, making it a key point in our selection process. The ability to easily and securely access internal systems from outside the office has led to an increase in productivity and motivation among our off-site employees. We would also like to transition to a VDI platform, making Horizon the perfect solution for our purposes now and in the future.”

TAKASHI TAKAMORI
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VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware Horizon Advanced Edition

At first, the company considered a content conversion plan as a cost-efficient way to update its systems and to make existing applications compatible with Safari. However, the process of content conversion requires detailed customizations for each application, meaning that considerable time, cost and effort would be required to update multiple applications. Because the systems would need to be expanded eventually as well, this was not a realistic solution.

FamilyMart decided to look into an application delivery system to meet its needs. With such a system in place, the applications would not need to be updated, and there would be little change to their usability, eliminating the difficulty of teaching new systems to the company's employees.

The Solution

After reviewing a number of options, the company chose VMware Horizon 6. The manager of the Head Office Information Systems Operating Group in the Information Systems Division, Mr. Takashi Takamori, said “As part of our research, we created a test environment that was as close to our actual system as possible, and we looked at the overall performance of the delivered applications. VMware Horizon was the best in the important areas of usability and responsiveness. Additionally, we knew that our company was going through the process of gradually replacing our PCs. We also wanted to eventually implement a virtual desktop platform based on the use of tablets as part of our main IT strategy. VMware Horizon has a strong reputation in the VDI industry, and with its large market share, we knew that we could easily turn to it to meet our needs if we proceeded. It is possible to add a VDI platform by just changing the settings, so we decided that VMware Horizon was the best choice to fit the needs of our company.”

In order to implement Horizon, said Takamori, FamilyMart relied on CTC's virtual private cloud service. “Thanks to their excellent support, were able to provide the VMware Horizon environment to approximately 2,000 off-site employees, despite the short turnaround time of approximately three months from October 2014 to January 2015. The results were immediately apparent as soon as the new system was introduced.”

Takamori continued, “Shortly after implementing the system, it was adopted in earnest by our store development staff and supervisors. There were no major problems or complaints, and the system was a fully functioning part of our overall infrastructure. Our fears about network overload were unfounded as well, and the system continually operated in a stable manner.”

Furthermore, Mr. Takamori began to notice the effect the new system was having on the work style of the company's off-site employees. “Our off-site employees began carrying tablets with them for documentation that used to be printed on paper, helping our company to go paperless and also delivering an additional level of security. Work reports can now be filled out on-site. Especially for supervisors, who have exceptionally long travel times, they are able to go straight to the site and then straight home, without the need to stop by the office. Not only has this revolutionary new way to work led to an increase in productivity of our off-site employees, I heard that it has also increased their motivation in regards to their jobs. I believe that helps increase the level of support they offer to the stores, which can also help boost sales for the company.”

Business Results and Benefits

In recent years, the convenience store industry has entered a new phase where companies are required to focus on generating additional value for their customers. At FamilyMart, the company is actively investing in its IT infrastructure in order to increase the speed and flexibility of its business.

In conjunction with this strategy, the company is advancing a project to give smart devices to the development staff who construct new stores, as well as supervisors who support its existing store business, in order to achieve its goals.

The project is being carried out across a total of three steps. In Step 1, FamilyMart developed a system that lets its employees check their emails and schedules, and perform other basic tasks.

As part of Step 2, the company provided iPads to store development staff members, so they could share presentation materials with real estate owners. Previously, the company had provided the employees with laptop computers, but in addition to being heavy and difficult to carry around, they were slow to boot up and it was hard to use them for face-to-face presentations. Furthermore, there was the constant possibility of losing the data due to mechanical failure or theft, which posed a considerable security risk. In response, the company implemented a cloud-based file sharing service in order to prevent storing the data on the device, thereby increasing the convenience and security of the entire system.

For the most important step, Step 3, the company expanded the program to include supervisors as it created an environment that enabled employees to use the company's internal systems, even when out in the field. It was at this point in the process that the decision to use Horizon was made. The company's goal was to radically alter the work style of its store developers and supervisors by allowing them to access work applications on-site.

Takamori noted that "For example, our supervisors are responsible for an average of seven stores each, and they visit them twice a week in order to help support their sales efforts. There is a great distance between stores, especially those in rural areas, so much so that some of our employees are required to drive around 1,000 km per week. Given this situation, it is highly inefficient when they are required to return to the main office in order to prepare materials or otherwise make use of our internal systems. That makes this project a vital mission for our company in order to increase our staff's satisfaction and to help reduce our costs."

Looking Ahead

Going forward, FamilyMart will consider using Horizon for more than just delivering applications to iPads, said Takamori. Their goal is to create a VDI platform for the PCs used by approximately 4,000 employees. "By doing so, we will be able to revolutionize the work style of our employees on a company-wide basis, enabling us to increase productivity, strengthen security, and support our business continuity efforts across the entire company. Looking ahead, we plan to use VMware technology to the fullest extent possible in order to continue on our path to creating a next-generation convenience store."

