

**Industry**

Software

**Customer Description**

This customer is a 4 year old, venture backed software developer that is a leader in its product space. They have had positive cash flow and a high growth trajectory. The company operates worldwide with sales operations in EMEA, Asia Pacific and North America.

**Success Highlights**

1. Reduced hardware investment by 50%
2. Decreased software license fees by 10%
3. Simplified server management resulting in improved responsiveness

**Taos Service Areas Deployed**

Interim Technical Talent

- Virtualization

**Tools and Technology used (network equipment not included)**

- VMware ESX 3.5 Enterprise
- VMware Infrastructure Center – used for management of the hosts and VMs
- DoubleTake for VMware
- Microsoft Windows 2003 Enterprise – allows for 4 Windows VMs per host, per license
- Microsoft Exchange 2003 Enterprise for the mailbox servers and Standard for the front end servers
- Blackberry Enterprise Server
- Two Hewlett-Packard Proliant DL380 servers with 18GB of RAM and 970 GB of local disk storage each

**Virtualized Mail Environment****Situation**

While the company was still small, it had outsourced e-mail to a company that provided hosted Microsoft Exchange services. As with most organizations, email was, and is, a key application. Under the hosted service, email administration was difficult, and certain key features were not provided by the vendor's tool. The customer contacted Taos for assistance in solving these issues. Taos provided a Sr. Technical Consultant to consult with the CEO to provide a more stable, scalable email solution. At the time, the customer had approximately 90 employees and was expecting 50% growth over the course of the next year. The Taos consultant was tasked with assessing the email issues and making a recommendation that would help the customer scale.

**Solutions**

The Taos consultant conducted an in-depth assessment of the existing mail solution to better understand its functionality and the current set of issues reported by the customer. In researching new solutions, the consultant explored both managed services and in house email management solutions. He determined that moving to a different managed service provider would not guarantee improvement. His ultimate recommendation was to bring the email solution in house to provide improved flexibility, performance, and security.

Understanding that the key requirements were to provide a high availability service and to minimize the capital investment, the Taos consultant initiated an investigation of hardware, software, and facilities to plan for the implementation and migration. The customer was already standardized on Microsoft Exchange 2003, and with Exchange 2007 still in its infancy, they decided to stay with their existing platform. The hardware decision was an easy one as the customer was standardized on HP.

## CLIENT CASE STUDY

One of the first challenges the Taos consultant faced was that their current office did not have reliable power and cooling to house the new systems. This resulted ultimately in the consultant's recommendation and the customer's decision to host off-site at a co-location facility. This facility provided environmental fault tolerance and reliability that would not have been possible at the client's office. By hosting off-site, a new requirement was added – the need for remote management capability. This was one of the key factors that led to the decision to use VMware ESX as a virtualization platform. The VMware Infrastructure Server is the central, remote management tool for ESX and would allow better performance monitoring with built-in alerting capability and remote server control.

The Taos consultant was responsible for the project management of this implementation from assessment through implementation and knowledge transfer. He coordinated the process of identifying and negotiating a lease for the co-location facility. He led the systems engineering efforts including hardware and software selection and negotiation. When it came time to migrate Exchange, Taos provided a consultant with specific expertise in this area, given that there were no in-house resources available in the customer's IT environment. The project had some occasional hurdles to overcome, including some performance issues related to hardware configurations. The Taos consulting team was able to leverage their peers from the Taos community as well as online VMware user forums to find the answer and solve the problem quickly.

### **Results**

Taos provided the customer a team of technical consultants to assess their mail situation, make a recommendation for how to improve it, and implement the solution. The project was completed on time and within budget. Users noticed no interruption and an increase in mail performance. Email system administration was made easier for the internal IT staff after solid documentation and knowledge transfer were provided by Taos. The customer was able to eliminate the cost of a monthly managed service, which had been steadily increasing as the company grew in headcount, by implementing their new solution which did not have any incremental costs once implemented.

In short, the project met the key requirements to the customer's satisfaction by managing the hardware investment and maintaining an email solution that has achieved 99.9% availability.

### **About TAOS**

Taos is a professional IT consulting services company. With more than 5,000 successful engagements at more than 1,000 clients, we have the experience and the technical expertise to help you achieve and sustain operational excellence. Our success is built upon the breadth and depth of our technical expertise, flexibility and objectivity – we are hardware and software vendor independent.