

Manufacturing Success Story: Cascade Lumber and Manufacturing

Cascade Lumber & Manufacturing

Organization Profile: Cascade Lumber & Manufacturing
Location: Cascade, IA
Organization Type: Manufacturing
Organization Size: 250 Employees
IT Staff: 1
Number of Servers Virtualized: < 30

FAST FACTS

Cascade Lumber and Manufacturing is a manufacturer of wood and cold-formed steel wall components serving residential, commercial and agricultural markets in the Midwest. With two production sites, the majority of IT is administered remotely by a staff of one, requiring an infrastructure that is highly available and easily supported. Cascade prides itself on its use of computer technology throughout the estimating, design and manufacturing processes, the backbone of which is a solid IT infrastructure.

“HC³ enables small to medium-sized businesses to jump into virtualization without all of the pitfalls and confusion of traditional solutions.”

- Joel Althoff, IT Manager,
- Cascade Lumber and Manufacturing

Introduction

Cascade Lumber and Manufacturing fully understood the benefits of virtualization when they initially deployed Citrix XenServer Enterprise Edition, but had underestimated the complexity in both setup and maintenance of such a deployment. The environment necessitated a number of host servers with complex iSCSI initiators, server clusters and policies to be configured and managed. Cascade also had to deploy shared storage (SAN) with iSCSI targets and LUNs, multi-pathing and storage security to manage.

Challenge

While this infrastructure accomplished the reliability and high availability needed in Cascade’s environment, the cost and complexity of growing and maintaining the environment was prohibitive.

“Trying to grow the capabilities of the infrastructure caused several headaches,” said Joel Althoff, IT Manager, Cascade Lumber and Manufacturing. “We needed the ability to grow without getting killed on the expense.”

Growing the system meant adding storage capacity and computing host servers, as well as purchasing additional licenses of their hypervisor. Cascade needed to consolidate their IT infrastructure with a scalable and cost effective solution that was easy to manage.



Solution

Cascade came across Scale Computing's HC³ - a hyperconverged solution that combines servers, storage, and virtualization into a product that delivers virtualized infrastructure-as-an-appliance. HC³ eliminates the need to purchase virtualization software, external servers and shared storage, resulting in significant reductions to cost and complexity.

According to Althoff, "We felt HC³ was the simplest, most reliable and most cost-effective way of deploying our infrastructure. We have moved from three separate pieces to manage, down to just one and I can manage it from anywhere that has a web browser."

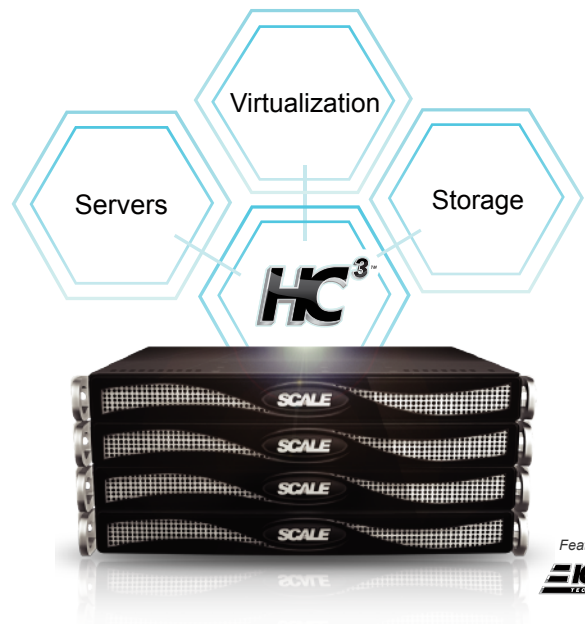
As a scale-out solution, additional compute or storage resources can be added to a cluster within minutes, with applications and data failing over between nodes in the event of equipment failure. This convergence has also resulted in significant timesavings in managing Cascade's infrastructure.

"I would estimate around 20 percent savings in management time over what we had with our XenServer deployment," said Althoff.

HC³ was built with the *availability* of a virtualized server and SAN, the *scalability* of a clustered infrastructure and

the *simplicity* of a single server. By deploying HC³, Cascade was able to realize the benefits of a fully virtualized environment without the complexity that existed in their prior virtualization deployment – all at a fraction of the cost of their prior solution.

"Most small businesses that I know are afraid of virtualization. They are scared of SANs and the complexity that it brings. HC³ enables small to medium-sized businesses to jump into virtualization without all of the pitfalls and confusion," says Althoff.



Integrated servers, storage and virtualization.
No sweat.