CASE Study

THE FIRST STEP TO VDI SUCCESS IS A PROOF OF CONCEPT APPLIANCE

How One Company Started Their Journey to VDI with Confidence

MASCO is a non-profit organization; their mission is to enhance Boston's Longwood medical and academic area for those who live, work, study, and receive care in the area. They are involved in a range of activities, from working with city and state agencies on open space infrastructure initiatives to offering a 24 x 7 call center service for hospitals, colleges, physicians, and businesses. MASCO wanted to assess VMware's virtual desktop solution to see if it would support their move from a physical desktop call center to a virtual call center, but they lacked the hardware, expertise, and the time needed to tackle the project. That's why they called in their trusted experts from Connection.

Chuck Badeau, Information Technology Director at MASCO, wanted to move to a virtual call center for disaster recovery (DR) purposes. "We wanted to get our operator stations for our call center onto a platform that could be recoverable at another site, and our goal was to do that with minimal administration," Badeau said. "We already have a good portion of our server infrastructure in a VMware vSphere environment, so looking at VMware View made a lot of sense. We're a small shop here; we don't have a lot of resources, so minimizing the overhead necessary to deal with these technologies was a primary concern."

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

MASCO wanted to realize the benefits of desktop virtualization: cost savings, ease of management, improved security, and platform independence. Their first step was to evaluate how existing applications would perform in their environment. One challenge that MASCO faced was acquiring the appropriate hardware for a Proof of Concept (PoC) as well as finding available IT staff time for setup and support. A Connection PoC Appliance allowed them to immediately begin testing their applications on virtual desktop technology in their own environment. As they tested and turned on applications and features, analytics helped to capture and quantify effects to the infrastructure— a critical data point in successful data-driven decisions about VDI in any organization.

Badeau added, "We have been working with Connection for quite a while. We planned to do our own proof of concept, and assuming that went well, we needed to know what to put in the budget to implement that solution. When I brought this up, our Account Manager introduced the idea of a PoC Appliance, and that started the ball rolling." The Connection Account Manager put Badeau in contact with their services team and the project got underway.
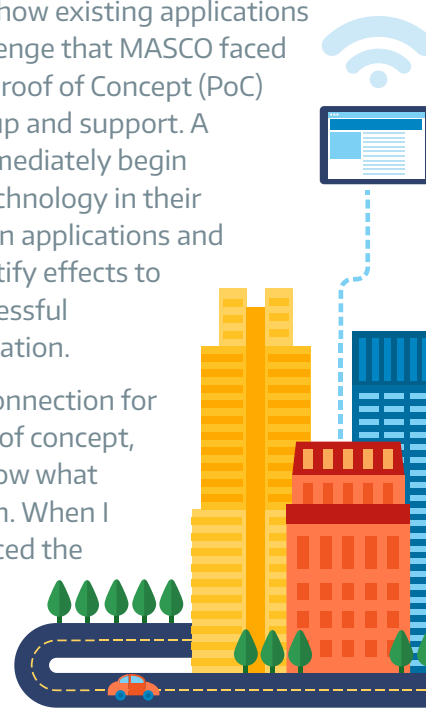
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CHUCK BADEAU, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR, MASCO

FIND THE RIGHT SOLUTION

"The whole project took a little over 50 days from beginning to end. After we decided through an introductory meeting with the Connection solutions and services team that this was something we wanted to pursue, we participated in a series of conference calls. The calls helped the Connection team create a document that defined what we were trying to determine—what would make the proof of concept a success or a failure," Badeau said. "Truthfully, this document helped me clarify my own expectations for what I needed to justify the expenditure and the solution," he added.

According to Badeau, the process was simple. "It was as close to plug-and-play as you could get. The PoC Appliance arrived as a small shippable rack that contained a current generation HP server with a switch; all the software was already installed. When the device was delivered, a Connection engineer came on-site and fired the whole thing up to make sure that from the appliance's side, everything looked good." He continued, "The engineer was able to walk us through creating an active directory truss to our network and the physical network connectivity to the PoC Appliance. We then had two days of hands-on training and the Connection engineer was able to assist us in customizing VMware View for our environment."

RELY ON THE BEST TEAM

After the installation, Connection was there to support MASCO through the process. Badeau said, "After the engineer left, it was our sandbox and we could do what we wanted to do with it. We had the support of the Connection services team via email and phone. Periodically they would check in with us to see how things were going." Badeau was pleased to discover that the PoC Appliance was a great choice to help them evaluate how their unique applications would perform in a virtual desktop environment. "The PoC Appliance definitely saved us a ton of time, and therefore a lot of money. To pay for something that we thought we could have done ourselves took some convincing. In the long run, it was a smart decision."

Given the opportunity to repeat the project, Badeau would choose to work with Connection again. He said, "As far as the Connection team is concerned, I really like the people. The Account Manager that I deal with is the person I have dealt with for years. She and her team are terrific. They always present themselves as wanting to help me solve my problems; I never feel like they're trying to sell me something."

❯❯ To learn more about the VDI Proof of Concept Appliance from Connection, contact an Account Manager or visit www.connection.com/vdipoc