



WHY MITEL?

CUSTOMER HIGHLIGHT SERIES

Gallagher, Flynn & Company, LLP

Accountants strengthen client relationships with Mitel
and VMware virtualization solution for voice





Modern professional service firms rely heavily on information technology to control costs and build lasting relationships with their clients. Gallagher, Flynn of Burlington, VT is a case in point. An accounting firm with over 50 practitioners delivering expertise in areas such as tax, audits, small business counselling, IT consulting, succession planning, human resources, and mergers and acquisitions, voice communications is critical for providing their clients with the sort of focussed, one-on-one access to professionals that complex and nuanced accounting issues demand.

By 2008, they had outgrown their existing Centrex system provided by Fairpoint Communications, which limited them to basic one-in, one-out calling and lacked the features to keep a mobile workforce seamlessly connected regardless of location. The Centrex approach also exposed them to reliability problems, which could bring their practice to a halt during the busy tax season from January to April. Migrating to the Virtual MCD solution with the help of TwinState/Voice.Data.Video. Inc. of Colchester, VT mitigated these problems while also reducing costs, but the real revolution has been the ability to virtualize their telephony network on the VMware® vSphere 4™ virtualization platform, bringing it into the data center and extending the benefits of virtualization to their entire IT network infrastructure.

Their first step toward virtualization was bringing the Mitel® Communications Director (MCD) call control software into their data center. This enables them to broaden the range of internal and external endpoints they can connect to their users, making it easier to guarantee that clients can reach an expert when they need to.

They also plan to virtualize the Mitel Applications Suite (MAS), which will give them advanced IP functionality including Mitel NuPoint Unified Messaging™ (UM), Mitel Speech Auto-Attendant, Mitel Unified Communicator® (UC) Mobile, and Mitel Audio & Web Conferencing (AWC). By also installing the Mitel Border Gateway (MBG) on VMware vSphere, they will achieve a secure, plug-and-play method of connecting remote workers, further enhancing their ability to provide rich, dynamic customer interactions.

Since, the entire Mitel Applications Suite can be deployed and managed on a single VMware ESX virtual machine, Gallagher, Flynn expects to realize time and cost reductions associated with initial deployment and ongoing management within their VMware vSphere environment.

Going Virtual

“Virtualization has been a holy grail for us,” relates Jim Paolicelli, IT Manager with Gallagher, Flynn. “Mitel and VMware have figured out how to do voice on a virtual host, and that lets us retire the last of our physical infrastructure.” As a result, they expect to see a lot of benefits as they roll their Mitel solution onto VMware vSphere.

- **Better reliability.** Gallagher, Flynn backs up entire running systems as virtual disk images, including memory, cache and dynamic configurations. These images are simple to transfer between their offices and data center in Hanover, NH for offsite storage. A server can be turned back up or moved to other hardware in minutes, making service continuity during planned outages a reality. Paolicelli points out that the ability to move an entire Mitel-based system to another machine with a single drag and drop in the event of a hardware failure was one of the most compelling features in VMware vSphere. And its advanced fault tolerance features will even automate recovery of critical services by performing seamless stateful failover and image duplication if a host fails.
- **Enhanced hardware consolidation.** They were able to consolidate all the services that formerly ran on 27 servers so that they now only have two physical machines. “The consolidation ratios with VMware vSphere are the best we’ve seen,” remarks Paolicelli. Bringing their Mitel environment to this mix will add a third server that will eventually host other applications in a balanced environment, and the host profiles offered by VMware vSphere – a way of quickly deploying new hosts based on standard profiles – will make this task even simpler.

Moving voice into their data center also means they can rid themselves of a lot of duplicate effort, such as maintaining redundant business continuity and disaster recover plans for a separate voice network.

- **Lower service agreement costs.** With the reduction in hardware to maintain, the cost of service agreements has also come down. Gallagher, Flynn has 24x7 service protection for a fraction of the cost to service a physical network delivering the same services.
- **Lower utility costs.** Fewer hardware systems consume less electricity, and the reduction in their energy footprint has not only lowered Gallagher, Flynn's monthly electricity bill, they are actually receiving substantial rebates through their utility's green audit program.

The servers run on storage area network (SAN) connected dual Xeon Dell systems with 24 gigabytes of memory. They had a long history with Mitel and found the Virtual MCD along with the Virtual Mitel Applications Suite solution rock solid. When they originally evaluated virtualization software for the data center, they looked at Microsoft® Virtual Server and Citrix XenServer™, but neither offered the features, stability, or performance of VMware vSphere. "I know the technology of VMware very well," relates Paolicelli. "They are clearly the industry leaders, and they've earned the respect of more users than any of their competitors." So when the opportunity came up to work with TwinState to combine these two environments, they leapt at it.

Freedom to experiment

Gallagher, Flynn particularly likes the freedom to experiment with new configurations that virtualization gives them. Cloning a live server and bringing up a sandboxed version to try out new configurations takes moments – and it's risk free, so the cost of trying out new things becomes inconsequential. Paolicelli points out that the same is true for training. "We can create a virtual host for new staff to try out and learn from knowing that they can't hurt anything." They simply delete the training image when they are done, and create new ones as needed.

COMPANY

An accounting firm providing tax and other services from offices in Vermont and New Hampshire.

CHALLENGE

To provide more personalized and reliable service to clients over their voice network.

EVALUATION

Selection based on previous experience with Mitel and VMware products, and the unique opportunity they afford to bring virtualized voice into the data center.

CHOICE

- Virtual MCD
- VMware vSphere 4 virtualization platform
- VMware vCenter™ management platform

REASONS

- Greatly enhanced reliability and cost-effective disaster recovery
- Market leading virtualization capabilities for voice
- Lower CapEx and OpEx costs
- Simplified licensing for SMBs

"The combination of VMware and Mitel is very compelling for a voice virtualization solution. Mitel has a very stable voice platform and I'm confident in its ability."

"A unified management view of our network helps us plan and optimize our investments for maximum utility."

– Jim Paolicelli, IT Manager,
Gallagher, Flynn & Company, LLP



Anywhere, any time maintenance

Gallagher, Flynn is a distributed company, with a presence in Vermont and New Hampshire, and IT staff as far away as New York. The VMware vCenter has given them a single management view into their network that can be accessed from anywhere, any time. Maintenance tasks that once involved physically accessing and taking down a machine at night or on the weekend are now done remotely without interrupting service. Paolicelli relates that he recently upgraded all 27 virtual servers, a task that would have taken about 5 hours of down time in the past, without incurring any interruption of service.

More room to manoeuvre

Any professional services outfit knows that it is not just time that is money, it's also floor space. Since going virtual with the combined Mitel Virtual and VMware Solution, Gallagher, Flynn has reduced their server space requirement from two full racks to less than a half of one. When the firm moves to a new location in the near future, they will be able to plan for a much smaller server room – up to 50% smaller, and recoup the monthly savings to reinvest elsewhere.

But the bottom line for Gallagher, Flynn has been service continuity. Professional firms are fundamentally person to person businesses, and voice communication will always be a cornerstone of their client relationships. Moving to a Mitel IP-based solution went a long way to improving their public presence. Virtualizing that system closes the circle, giving them unified, low cost management, backup and disaster recovery across all of their IT assets.

About TwinState/Voice.Data.Video.Inc.

TwinState leverages its adaptability to emerging technologies in voice, data and video communications disciplines, excellent customer service, and superb technical capabilities to provide communications products and services. TwinState is a Mitel Exclusive Business Partner and operates from offices throughout New England and in New York state.

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