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An insurance policy for enhancing IT performance

Tokio Marine Assistance transforms its IT—reducing costs by 33 percent and increasing performance with Dell EMC hyperconverged technology

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Business needs

Tokio Marine Assistance looked to upgrade the virtualized platform supporting the operating system and business-critical systems to help transform the performance of its IT, while migrating from Windows Server 2008 to Windows Server 2016.

Solutions at a glance

- Dell EMC Solutions for Microsoft Azure Stack HCI
  - Dell EMC PowerEdge R740xd S2D Ready Nodes
  - Dell EMC Networking S4128F-ON switches

- Dell EMC ProSupport Plus

- Dell EMC ProDeploy for Enterprise

- Dell EMC SupportAssist for Enterprise

Business results

- Reduced IT costs by 33%

- Decreased the amount of hardware by 73%

- Increased performance from faster software deployments

- Obtained greater stability with added redundancy built in

- Deployed solution in only 2 months

- Maximized performance with rapid support

"Over the long run, we believe we will save around 33 percent in costs for expanding our server capacity on the HCI from Dell EMC."

Asataro Nomura, Manager, Infrastructure Service Section,
Information Technology Department, Tokio Marine Assistance

Tokio Marine Assistance (TMAS) provides support services to holders of insurance policies issued by Tokio Marine Group. These support services include roadside assistance for auto-insurance clients as well as hospital assistance for people with Tokio Marine Group healthcare policies.

Traditionally, TMAS ran its operations on a virtualized platform, featuring 15 physical servers running Microsoft Hyper-V. The business needed to upgrade its operating system from Windows Server 2008 to Windows Server 2016 and took the opportunity to review its entire platform. Asataro Nomura, manager of the Infrastructure Service Section, Information Technology Department at TMAS, says, "Virtualized server platforms like ours offered clustering but without high availability. Any issues with the physical servers would cause issues with the virtual servers. We went to seminars and did lots of research online and saw that we could deliver our requirements with a hyperconverged infrastructure."

Working with a trusted IT solution provider

TMAS turned to Dell EMC, its long-standing IT vendor. Yumito Suoh, an engineer for the Infrastructure Service Section, Information Technology Department at TMAS, says, "We had a very positive experience working with Dell EMC, and consider Dell EMC a partner. If we had any issues, the response from the support team was rapid."

Stakeholders at TMAS sat down with its Dell EMC account team to discuss hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) technology. Nomura says, "We received detailed information on all the possible HCI solutions and configurations, so we could choose the best solution for TMAS." The discussion revealed that TMAS could run Azure Stack HCI, Microsoft's hyperconverged solution, based on Windows Server 2016 Storage Spaces Direct (S2D) on a Dell EMC platform, using TMAS's existing Windows Server 2016 Datacenter license. Nomura says, "The ability to transition to HCI under the umbrella of the server operating system license was a huge cost benefit for us."

Deployment in just 2 months

Working with Dell EMC, TMAS designed a new platform based on Dell EMC PowerEdge R740xd S2D Ready Nodes running Azure Stack HCI with Dell EMC Networking S4128F-ON switches for data links. TMAS then worked with Dell EMC ProDeploy for Enterprise, which provided the IT team with a deployment blueprint to follow. Nomura comments, "Scalability and system availability were must-haves for us, and as we searched for an infrastructure solution that could deliver stable operational performance, we came across Dell EMC Solutions for Microsoft Azure Stack HCI. It was our first time building a platform with Azure Stack HCI, and we were surprised that it only took two months."

"We can deliver applications in a short time thanks to Dell EMC Solutions for Azure Stack HCI."

Yumito Suoh, Engineer,
Infrastructure Service Section,
Information Technology Department,
Tokio Marine Assistance

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Faster deployment and greater redundancy

The TMAS IT team works more efficiently, delivering applications faster to enhance the efficiency of the company's operations. Suoh says, "We can deliver applications in a short time thanks to Dell EMC Solutions for Microsoft Azure Stack HCI. We used to think about storage as a separate issue, but with Azure Stack HCI we can centrally manage both, from one point of control, which is much simpler and easier."

To maximize HCI performance, TMAS uses Dell EMC SupportAssist Enterprise, a key part of Dell EMC Solutions for Microsoft Azure Stack HCI, which also includes the integrated Dell Remote Access Controller (iDRAC). In addition, TMAS has Dell EMC ProSupport Plus to fall back on in the event of a performance problem. Suoh says, "We find that Dell EMC SupportAssist quickly identifies potential issues and automatically flags them to Dell EMC. Support has been rapid and proactive, which we are very grateful for. With this approach, we can stop issues in their tracks."

Decreased the amount of hardware by 73%

With the new Dell EMC solution, TMAS has reduced its data center footprint from 15 to 4 physical servers. Nomura comments, "We now need a smaller space to run the system, which is a plus. Eventually, when we complete the transition to the new solution, we will have removed one rack of servers."

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Asataro Nomura, Manager,
Infrastructure Service Section,
Information Technology Department,
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Reduced long-term costs by 33%

Scaling the HCI environment will be less expensive than the previous platform. Nomura states, "If we had chosen to simply migrate from Windows Server 2008 to Windows Server 2016 on the legacy platform, our initial costs would have been lower. Soon, however, we would have needed to add more physical servers. Over the long run, we believe we will save around 33 percent in costs for expanding our server capacity on the HCI from Dell EMC, while gaining increased system availability and redundancy."

Plans to go all-in with HCI

TMAS has migrated most of its business-critical systems to HCI. Now the company is looking at moving email and a customer relationship management application to the HCI environment. Nomura explains, "Once we have a few months of trouble-free operations with Azure Stack HCI under our belt, we can look at other TMAS locations and data centers and how HCI can help us reduce costs and server rack space at these locations. Our disaster recovery sites would be an obvious place to adopt HCI."
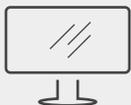
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