

Palmer College unlocks IT versatility & value

VxBlock delivers on performance, productivity & cloud transitions.



Nonprofit

United States

Business needs

The aging IT infrastructure at Palmer College required constant maintenance and staff attention. Performance was poor, and user complaints were frequent. Their move to VxBlock converged infrastructure has not only resolved all performance issues, but it has also freed staff to focus on future movement to cloud based services and strategic engagement to add services and advance college business..

Solutions at a glance

- Primary Data Center
- VxBlock System 540 w/5TB X-Brick
- Remote Data Center
- Avamar
- Data Domain

Business results

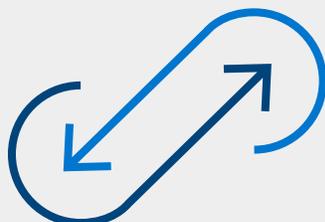
- Annual reduction of \$100,000 - \$150,000 in data center hardware
- \$25,000 annual maintenance contract savings
- \$40,000 savings in repurposed servers moved

from Iowa to Florida and California campuses

- Dramatic decrease in user support calls and complaints

80%

time reduction in support, troubleshooting, and operations



90%

faster payroll batch reports



The main campus of Palmer College of Chiropractic is in Davenport Iowa with two smaller campuses in Florida and California. It provides hands-on, interactive learning opportunities leading to professional Chiropractic degrees and includes the world's largest chiropractic outpatient clinic system. Palmer is widely recognized for their strong research commitment to advance the chiropractic future.

The challenge

IT pains at Palmer College were not unusual. Like so many others, their systems had grown by addition. Individual servers, storage, and network components were added as needed with no master plan. There were no clear specifications. No consistency. When Mark Wiseley joined as Senior Director of IT in 2015, he encountered a jumbled infrastructure that required constant troubleshooting and interminable tinkering. "The biggest issue was poor performance," Wiseley said. "We had constant user complaints. Payroll processing was unacceptably slow. Students were impacted by a sluggish Student Information System. Even running all night, data backups couldn't complete." They adjusted where possible.

They tweaked storage and turned off dedup. They added new disks. It wasn't enough.

"The VxBlock has been an enormous plus for us. It gives us time."

Mark Wiseley, Senior Director of IT,
Palmer College

"The system makes moving to cloud services smoother and simpler. My staff has become fully future-focused."

Mark Wiseley, Senior Director of IT,
Palmer College

Examining options

The Palmer team briefly considered selecting and installing all the needed replacement components themselves, but they didn't want to risk creating another unintegrated environment. Their research pointed to potential advantages of a converged environment. They saw an opportunity for a complete transformation that could set the stage for expanded services and future cloud deployments.

After consulting colleagues, examining offerings and soliciting quotes, they quickly narrowed the converged vendor list to DELL EMC. Their selection of a VxBlock promised an opportunity to address multiple pain points – performance, storage, backup, and disaster recovery. The platform's flexibility would also support new business requirements as they made the transition to a hybrid cloud.

The solution

Mark Wiseley and his team created a business case and SWOT analysis with some assistance from the DELL EMC account team. The proposal was reviewed

by the Executive team as well as the Board of Trustee's Technology Committee. Wiseley made the case that this was the best and fastest way to improve and stabilize the Palmer IT environment. It would set them up for the future while providing the time they needed to create a larger cloud strategy.

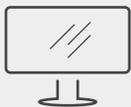
His own experience and reports from colleagues who had taken the converged course had convinced Wiseley that converged infrastructure would relieve his staff from emergency operations mode. He saw the integrated system with all components tested, certified and supported by a single vendor as an impetus for a complete shift in operations and organization.

The benefits

Palmer's VxBlock is delivering the flexibility, reliability, and performance they wanted. The platform was installed on a Monday and had production workloads up and running by Wednesday. Within two weeks, all production had been migrated. The team has also taken advantage of DELL EMC setup assistance and additional education after the hand-off. With cross training, the entire team is engaged. And the platform is so reliable and self-sustaining that it requires minimal attention and none of the maintenance and troubleshooting that the old systems demanded. Operations and staff efficiencies have helped the IT team better align with the business. The fully redundant Enterprise-class platform has reduced support, troubleshooting and operations time by over 80%. And they have had no downtime in over a year. Palmer is expanding service offerings, including on-line student registrations, Salesforce integration with the Student Information System, and a simple, standardized imaging process for software updates on laptops and servers.

“The VxBlock has enabled us to make tremendous positive changes. Our users are thrilled with the IT team’s responsiveness and with the accelerated application performance. It’s also changed the relationship between IT and the college. Business units now engage us to consult early in their decision process. We’ve become an integral partner in college business.”

Ray Matthews, Automation Engineer,
New Belgium Brewing



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