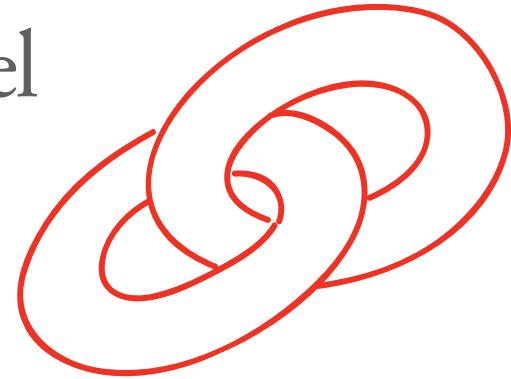


Conseco Partners with Logicalis on a Comprehensive Virtualization Strategy to Insure High-Level Data Center Performance



Conseco Inc. (NYSE:CNO) helps protect millions of Americans against unplanned major expenses with health and life insurance programs and offers annuity products to help people plan for retirement. A Fortune 1000 company, Conseco earns more than \$4 billion in annual revenue.

To ensure that its main data center in Carmel, Indiana performs at peak efficiency, Conseco's IT department has partnered with Logicalis in an ongoing comprehensive virtualization strategy that has accomplished consolidation ratios of 65 virtual machines to one physical host running VMware vSphere 4. Conseco was able to eliminate 20 to 30 physical servers a month during the height of the implementation.

Conseco Software Engineering Manager, Jon Adams, estimates that the high-level of consolidation from virtualization that Conseco has accomplished reduces the need to purchase the equivalent of approximately \$400,000 in new hardware every year. Savings in energy costs alone amount to about \$100,000 a year.

Beyond Expectations

"We bet the farm on virtualization," Adams says. "And it's paid off beyond our expectations."

Savings from consolidation represent only the first wave of gains, Adams adds. "The benefits we've realized from consolidation could eventually be dwarfed by the benefits from other aspects of virtualization. It's the net new stuff that the business is demanding from us that is becoming more important because our turn-around times are so fast. Virtualization allows us to respond very quickly to business demands and get processing power on the floor for our customers."

IT Deploy

An ironic hazard of the success of virtualization is that, because it is so easy to deploy servers, the very server sprawl that consolidation curtails in the physical world, can too often become replicated in the virtual world, and at a characteristically rapid pace. Having successfully reined in physical server sprawl through consolidation, the Conseco IT department had the foresight to set up specific procedures through its IT Deploy process to guard against virtual server sprawl.

"Every customer request that comes into the data center has to be justified," Adams says. "We assign dollar amounts for specs like the number of CPUs, disk drives, and memory requirements that establish an IT cost for each request. Then, when budget time comes around, we know exactly what we've allocated to each department."

Centralized management of the virtualized environment allows Adams and his team to maintain optimum performance by tracking the level of consumption of VMware resources.

One capability that virtualization has enabled Conseco to begin reclaiming is disaster recovery (DR). Conseco currently outsources its DR environment to a third party, at considerable expense. Virtualization has made it possible for Conseco to attempt self-assurance DR and apply the resulting savings to business initiatives that better serve its customers.

“The good thing with Logicalis is they have a lengthy history with Consecos so they know where we’ve been and where we want to go and can tailor solutions for us based on that.”

Jon Adams, Software Engineering Manager, Consecos

Virtual Desktop Infrastructure

The next major push is for virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI). “Right now we have a lot of remote access using a VPN (virtual private network) connection to a physical PC asset,” Adams says. “That is the absolute wrong way to do this.”

Adams has clearly given a lot of thought to the right way to provide remote access. “Desktop virtualization eliminates the uniqueness of individual desktops, so settings are managed centrally and there is a consistent experience across multiple users. Our ability to impact change in those environments is different, too. There is no need for manual desktop intervention. When I need to upgrade an application to a new version, all I have to do is upgrade it on the server and the next time Mary Jane in Accounting logs in, she’s running the latest version. It’s that simple. That really excites me because it’s a logical progression of what we’re doing in the data center.”

Trusted Advisor

Adams says Logicalis has been Consecos’s partner and trusted advisor throughout its ongoing virtualization journey. “They participate in strategic discussions with us and provide all the details and education we need about products from IBM, VMware and other vendors so when our implementation takes off, we have a lot of the to-dos already done. [Logicalis account executive] Bill Parker is my go-to guy,” Adams says. “I don’t have to be an expert on my own on the IBM xSeries or on VMware. I can say, ‘Bill, this is what I want to do,’ and he assembles the resources for us and we head down the road.”

About Logicalis

Logicalis is an international provider of integrated information and communications technology (ICT) solutions and services founded on a superior breadth of knowledge and expertise in communications and collaboration, data center, and professional and managed services.

Logicalis Group employs over 1,900 people worldwide, including highly trained service specialists who design, specify, deploy and manage complex ICT infrastructures to meet the needs of over 5,000 corporate and public sector customers. To achieve this, Logicalis maintains strong partnerships with technology leaders such as Cisco, HP, IBM and Microsoft.

The Logicalis Group has annualized revenues of \$1 billion, from operations in the UK, US, Germany, South America and Asia Pacific, and is fast establishing itself as one of the leading IT and Communications solution integrators, specializing in the areas of advanced technologies and services.

The Logicalis Group is a division of Datatec Limited, listed on the Johannesburg and London AIM Stock Exchanges, with revenues in excess of \$4 billion.

For more information, visit www.us.logicalis.com.

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