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LifeStore
BANKING
INSURANCE

LifeStore Lowers their Cost of Running Virtual Environments by 1.5X with a Transition from VMware to Hyper-V

LifeStore achieves turn-key deployment & savings transitioning from EMC VNXe and VMware Licenses to Microsoft Windows Server 2012, Windows Storage Spaces and DataON Storage CiB

The Challenge



Lower the costs and management overhead of running virtual machines and prepare for Microsoft Windows Server 2016

The Solution



The DataON Storage CiB helped eliminate licensing costs and simplified deployment of virtual machines with an easy to manage Microsoft Windows Server 2012 environment

The Result



- Easy and quick deployment
- Lowered VM deployment cost by 1.5X
- Lowered storage costs by 250% over EMC VNXe with FC
- Reduced capital expenses to support more VMs
- Redeployed IT resources to new projects
- Easy to manage another Windows server
- Prepared for transition to Microsoft Windows Server 2016

Customer Background

LifeStore Financial Group is a federally chartered thrift holding company providing banking and insurance services to North Carolina via their owned and operated LifeStore Bank and LifeStore Insurance Services. LifeStore Bank conducts business from its main office located in West Jefferson, North Carolina, with branches in Boone, Jefferson, Warrensville, and West Jefferson, North Carolina - with insurance offices in Sparta, North Wilkesboro, Elkin, and Lenoir and a commercial loan office in Morganton, North Carolina. As LifeStore Bank's locations expanded, so did their IT and datacenter needs.

IT Challenge – Lower OPEX Cost, Reduce Complexity, Leverage the Cloud for Bursting and DR

Driven by a desire to lower licensing costs and simplify the management of their virtual machine deployments, LifeStore Bank began to research alternatives that would reduce the number of management consoles and the complexity of running VMware's ESXi and EMC infrastructure. Inspiration came in the form of RunasRadio (<http://runasradio.com>) podcasts and blogs by Aidan Finn (<http://www.aidanfinn.com>), a leading Microsoft MVP. From these sources LifeStore learned that both Microsoft Windows Server 2012's Hyper-V and Storage Spaces had matured into stable environments and were in fact a proven, viable, and cost effective alternative to VMware's ESXi and EMC's VNXe. It soon became clear to the LifeStore Bank's IT team that Hyper-V and Storage Spaces could be a game changers for their data centers. Switching to Microsoft Hyper-V and Storage Spaces would present multiple advantages:

- Enabled them to leverage existing investments in Windows Server 2012
- Solid and stable platform
- Reduce VMware ESXi and EMC software and annual maintenance costs
- Unify management onto Microsoft System Center Virtual Machine Manager (SCVMM)
- Simplify training and troubleshooting
- Ability to leverage cloud bursting and DR with Microsoft Azure
- Simplified VM migration between on premise and Microsoft Azure Cloud

Microsoft Systems Center provided a simple control center to manage the virtual machines, coupled with Microsoft Azure, LifeStore Bank is able to leverage cloud bursting, disaster recovery as well as simple migration of virtual machines between their premises to the cloud.

Why Did We Chose the DataON Storage CiB?

LifeStore Bank had a clear set of goals when evaluating new solutions, reduce their capital and operating expenses, simplify their management infrastructure, reduce initial as well as annual software maintenance costs and finally to reduce staff's time spent training, troubleshooting, and updating. Aidan Finn, a noted Microsoft MVP, has done extensive testing with the DataON Storage Cluster-in-Box (CiB) Solution. Finn knows from firsthand experience that the DataON Storage Cluster-in-Box (CiB) will deliver on these goals, and of course it is on the Microsoft certified hardware list. LifeStore Bank found that DataON Storage's CiB answered their need to reduce the cost of their software requirements, consolidate data center hardware all in an easy to deploy package letting LifeStore Bank to easily transition to Microsoft Hyper-V. The DataON Storage Cluster-in-Box aligned with LifeStore Bank's goals by providing an easy to deploy integrated platform that includes dual servers, redundant powers supplies, SSD and HDD storage and multiple networking options including InfiniBand and 1/10/40GbE RDMA (Remote Direct Memory Access) for maximizing network and storage connectivity via SMB (Server Message Block) transfers networking platform that unified management of all systems components with MSCS VMM, all to create a high availability cluster environment. These factors along with a desirable price point and ease of installation made DataON Storage CiB, their preferred choice. CiB also lowered software licensing cost by eliminating the need for VMware and storage management software.



"We did our homework before we picked the DataON Storage CiB, the endorsement of Aidian Finn, who had already used the systems and the Microsoft's certification made it the right choice for LifeStore"

--**Josh Rountree**; "By moving to Microsoft Windows Server 2012 Hyper-V and Storage Spaces we saved money in five ways: we leverage our current Windows Server Enterprise server licenses, eliminated VMware costs, Eliminated EMC costs, Lowered CAPEX with CiB vs VNXe and lower administrative cost with SCVMM."

Who else did LifeStores consider beyond DataON Storage?

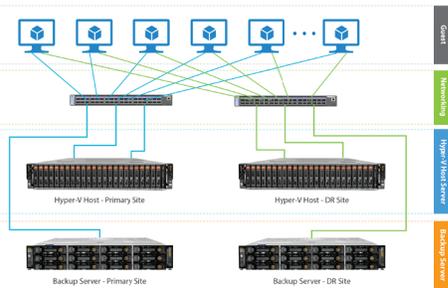
"We looked at multiple vendors and options during this evaluation including DataON Storage, EMC, Nutanix, and Simplivity,"- Josh Rountree, IT Director LifeStore Bank.

DataON Storage was not the only vendor considered. LifeStore Bank examined four vendors and their solutions, to see how each could meet their goals; to reduce capital, reduce complexity, lower operating expenses and simplify management.

LifeStore Bank first considered upgrading to the next generation of EMC VNXe, but eventually rejected this after concerns about initial CAPEX cost and annual support cost projections. Nutanix and Simplivity were also considered by LifeStore Bank. Nutanix and Simplivity were similarly rejected after realizing that each would require multiple management environments and increased software licenses.

Requirement	DataON	EMC	Simplivity	Nutanix
Single Management Console Server & Storage	Y	N	N	Y
Lower Server OS Costs	Y	N	N	N
Lower Hypervisor Costs	Y	N	N	Y
Lower Storage Management Costs	Y	N	N	N
Lower Cost to Scale Storage	Y	N	N	N
Microsoft Certified for Storage Spaces	Y	Y	N	N
Azure Cloud DR Support	Y	Y	Y	Y
High Speed Networking (RDMA)	Y	Y	N	N

LifeStore's Configuration

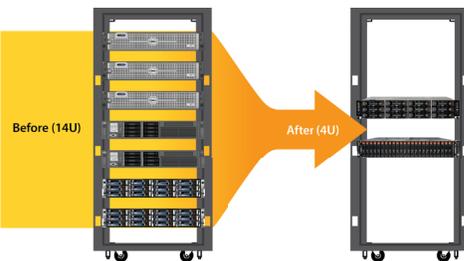


How did LifeStore Bank Transition their Data Center to DataON Storage CiBs and Hyper-V?

The team at LifeStore Bank found the transition from VMware to be an easy and smooth process with Hyper-V and Storage Spaces providing a solid and stable platform for their production environments. "You have to make sure your data center ready including cabling, power cooling, rack space, then look at your networking strategy, subnets etc...do you have the right active directory domain in place, do you have a staging environment, are your production processes and SLAs intact and are your backup systems tested and ready for the transition," said Josh Rountree, he continued "We used Veeam to run our backups and Vision Solutions DoubleTake to migrate the VMs from VMware to Hyper-V. Five transition tips from Josh Rountree, IT Director for LifeStore Bank.

- Remember the big picture and don't lose sight of why you are transitioning
- Prepare your server room, don't neglect proper electricity and cooling, battery backup and UPS
- House at least one domain controller in a separate location
- Know how to trouble shoot, even easy installations will have hiccups
- Have fun when test driving, play around and break it to learn what it's capable of

LifeStore's Production



Conclusion – Production Ready and Running

LifeStore found that DataON CiB being purpose-built for Microsoft Hyper-V gave LifeStore a turn-key experience. One month after selecting Microsoft Hyper-V and DataON Storage Cluster-in-Box (CiB), LifeStore Bank has moved over ten Terabytes of data and twenty virtual machines running a variety of applications such as domain controllers, print server, exchange, file server, internal lab, virus scan, patch management and general purpose servers. LifeStore expects to deploy more CiBs in the future for both our data center and co-location facilities. The process was smooth and the IT team has been able to meet all of their SLAs.

About DataON™

DataON™ is the industry leading provider for Hyper-Converged Cluster Appliances (HCCA) and storage systems optimized for Microsoft® Windows Server environments. Our solutions are built with the single purpose of rapidly and seamlessly deploying Microsoft applications, virtualization, data protection, and hybrid cloud services. Our company is focused on customers who have made the "Microsoft Choice" and we provide the ultimate platform for the Microsoft Software-Defined Data Center (SDDC). DataON™ is a division of Area Electronics Systems, Inc.

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