



INGRAM MICRO CLOUD SERVICES CASE STUDY

Simplified Innovations

Founded: 2008

url: simplifiedinnovations.com

Employees: 4

Key Market Vertical: CPA firms

Business Challenge: A 65-employee CPA firm with an aging IT infrastructure terminated its only IT manager less than one month prior to its busy tax season.

Solution: By migrating the firm to a Citrix environment running on hosted servers, the VAR was able to solve the client's immediate problem and put them in a good position to migrate to a hosted Citrix environment when the time was right.

Take a Phased Approach to Selling DaaS

This MSP's knowledge of accounting and DaaS (Desktop as a Service) technology make it the go-to trusted business advisor among CPA firms and a hard-to-beat competitor among IT generalists.

Byron Patrick, CEO and Cofounder, Simplified Innovations knows that having a thorough knowledge of his customers' accounting practices, combined with his IT skills, gives him an advantage that no IT generalist can match. Shortly after earning his accounting degree, Patrick became an IT director at a 125-person CPA firm, which was where he and now business partner Daniel Houle became introduced to Citrix centralized networking. "Daniel and I got our experience working with Citrix MetaFrame servers, and we quickly saw a lot of value in a virtualized architecture," he says. "One of the big appeals was the fact that remote access was native to the virtualized application, something that wasn't very popular years ago, but has become an important differentiator within the past couple of years."

Dealing With a Busy CPA Firms Legacy Servers

The MSP recently won a project with a 65-person CPA firm that affirmed its decision to specialize in focusing exclusively on working with CPA firms. The opportunity came to Simplified Innovations via the Maryland

Association of CPAs, of which Patrick is a member. "When we first engaged with the client, it was obvious they were having some pretty serious IT issues," he says. "They had a couple of dated servers they were running and their network design was a mess."

Making matters even worse, the firm terminated its only IT manager less than one month before its busy tax season was about to begin. "We tried to convince them to get out of the IT business and allow us to help them move their IT infrastructure to the cloud and access their business apps in a hosted desktop environment," recalls Patrick. "Despite the firm's predicament, they were skeptical that a young company like ours would be able to pull off such a major IT overhaul, and they were concerned about the performance and availability of accessing their applications remotely."

Small Steps to the Cloud

The MSP addressed the firm's concerns by suggesting starting with a step in the hosted direction. "We proposed upgrading one of their servers and leasing two Citrix servers, which would allow us to create a unified desktop environment and to give them some of the features and benefits they would receive from a fully hosted environment while still keeping their servers onsite," he says. Over of a weekend, Patrick and Houle were able to implement phase 1 of the plan, which sustained the CPA firm through its tax season, followed by a move to another office location.

After following up with the client to discuss rolling out the next phase of the network migration, the CPA firm was much more receptive. "They had already been running in a Citrix environment without any problems for over a year, and they were open so seeing how moving to our private cloud data center could offer additional advantages," says Patrick.

To alleviate any remaining concerns, the MSP set up a beta version of its client's network in its data center to allow the client to experience the feel of working remotely before going live. "The client found their applications performed faster in our cloud data center than they did running on the local servers," says Patrick.

Cloud-Based DaaS Offers Better Performance at a Predictable Price

Since making the move, the Citrix architecture has helped the client in many ways. "Their office has had a number of power outages and Internet outages due to the inclement weather that comes with living in the mid-Atlantic region," says Patrick. "During these times, employees have been able to work from home to access their apps, which would not have been possible had they continued running on their local servers. Plus, in our professional data center environment, their data is more secure – both while at rest on our servers as well as when accessed over a secure remote connection. Plus, all their data is backed up regularly with our Datto BDR appliance and all the Microsoft SPLAs are managed through our distribution partner, Ingram Micro."

WHERE RAINMAKERS THRIVE





In its cloud data center, Simplified Innovations uses Citrix XenServer, Citrix NetScaler and access gateway, XenApp for Citrix Desktops, and a Citrix Provisioning Server. “The Provisioning Server allows a single disk image to be used for all the client’s apps and to be streamed out to multiple virtual servers. Without the Provisioning Server, five separate servers would have been required and office apps would have to be installed five times,” he says. “In addition to lengthening the implementation, application troubleshooting was more complicated.”

Simplified Innovations now supports 400 end users, and it’s only lost three clients during its entire five-year history – all through uncontrollable events such as acquisitions or bankruptcy. “Once a client adopts the Citrix DaaS model and experiences the scalability and elasticity of running their apps in the cloud, they never want to go back,” says Patrick. “Plus, paying for their IT as a subscription means they never have to worry about unpredictable IT costs ever again.” And the fact that this MSP can service 400 customers with only 4 employees is another testament that the technology really works.