



connect. transform. repeat.



“Now that we have an infrastructure that’s capable of handling change at a rapid pace, we’re making our partners and our customers happy. Simply put, this could not have been done without Möbius Partners.”

CASE STUDY: RENT-A-CENTER CLOUD INTEGRATION AND VIRTUALIZATION

Rent-A-Center (RAC) provides a flexible, affordable way for consumers to purchase name-brand furniture, computers, appliances, and electronics through its rent-to-own model. Through organic growth and acquisitions, RAC has expanded the business from 16 original locations to nearly 3,000 brick and mortar stores. The fast growing retailer needed a scalable, secure, easy-to-deploy IT infrastructure to meet the increased demands of its business.

THE CHALLENGE

The RAC IT landscape tripled over 18 months to accommodate the company’s rapid expansion. Their IT environment was a complex mix of older legacy systems and recently purchased newer technology. They had a legacy virtualization infrastructure in place but it was severely under-supported. Getting the disparate systems to work together was difficult. RAC faced additional challenges:

- Pressure to implement a new Point-of-Sale system to all locations within six months.
- Need to address security and data recovery concerns especially in regards to its regulatory responsibilities.
- Need to scale systems to deal with variable workload.
- Need to dramatically accelerate the timeline to deploy new systems to add more capability to the rapidly growing business.
- Need for a partner to spearhead, integrate, test and deploy on time and under budget.

OVERVIEW

INDUSTRY
Retail




KEY CHALLENGES

- Accelerate Point of Sale systems deployment
- Address disaster recovery and credit card security issues
- Scale system to handle variable workload
- Reduce time required to deploy new infrastructure for additional IT capacity

SOLUTION

Rent-A-Center upgraded and expanded its virtualized server environment with expert services delivered by Möbius Partners and advanced technology from VMware. The solution was developed using VMware products:

- vRealize Automation to drive business agility by automating the delivery of personalized IT services.
- vRealize Operations to automate IT operations management, manage performance and gain visibility across the physical and virtual infrastructure.
- vCloud Air Virtual Private Cloud providing Infrastructure as a Service and vCloud Air Disaster Recovery as a Service.



Working together, Möbius Partners, RAC, and VMware were able to implement the multi-million-dollar project in 90 days. “We met our time, budget and delivery objectives,” said Vogt. “I can’t over emphasize how well everything came together. Everyone knew what was needed and just made it happen.”

“We had to update the infrastructure and we had to find better, more efficient ways to support the business. We had a huge need for many more servers and we needed a solution that was efficient, auditable, and repeatable,” said Martin Vogt, Systems Engineering Manager in charge of run operations for RAC.

THE SOLUTION

To drive the virtualization initiative, RAC chose VMware partner Möbius Partners because of their highly trained technical resources and exceptional responsiveness. With the VMware infrastructure in place, RAC was able to dramatically accelerate their POS installations. “We went from having to babysit each individual store upgrade to being able to deploy hundreds of stores at a time without having to worry about it,” said Michael Conroy, Senior Infrastructure Architect at RAC. “With vRealize Automation and NSX it’s just like pressing a button,” said Conroy. “We can turn up a whole environment, deliver to a development team in a day, have it validated, and then have it quickly up and running.”

The Möbius Partners/VMware solution was also able to solve the legacy technology challenges. “With the new tools we were able to virtualize all those applications and now they’re performing many times better than when they were running native on the aging hardware,” said Conroy. RAC was able to meet all the strict Payment Card Industry (PCI) 3 Security Guidelines using VMware’s NSX micro-segmentation capabilities instead of expensive physical firewalls. Using vCloud Air, RAC was able to implement an effective disaster recovery and backup program which also enabled quick deployment of servers that might be needed to handle unforecasted spikes in workload. Using AirWatch for their mobile infrastructure, RAC has deployed thousands of mobile devices, including to partners where there is no physical RAC presence.

Working together, Möbius Partners, RAC, and VMware were able to implement the multi-million-dollar project in 90 days. “We met our time objectives, our budget objectives, and our delivery objectives,” said Vogt. “I can’t over emphasize how well everything came together. Everyone knew what was needed and just made it happen.”

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Thanks to the Möbius Partners/VMware solution, the RAC IT environment is now close to 90% virtualized enabling more efficient management of the infrastructure. They now have increased visibility into utilization at every level from the network to storage all the way to the hosts of the individual VMs themselves. “If we didn’t have the VMware tools, we’d be looking at major purchases of racks full of equipment and long time lines for implementation,” said Conroy. “We now have an 85% reduction in infrastructure. It’s just been a tremendous savings in every dimension.”

The upgrade has made RAC more competitive — a key differentiator going forward. “The ability to react quickly to changes — in the market, regulations, tax implications — is becoming a competitive advantage,” said Conroy. “Now that we have an infrastructure that’s capable of handling change at a rapid pace, we’re making our partners and our customers happy. Simply put, this could not have been done without Möbius Partners.”

THE FUTURE

“The VMware solution has helped us redefine where we want to go as a company and as an IT organization,” said Vogt. RAC has plans to take further advantage of improvements of the VMware technology down the road. “We will be much further along in our cloud journey in the next five years,” said Conroy. “Soon you’ll see the majority of our infrastructure in the Cloud with the ability to easily move back and forth from on-premise to the Cloud. I think any organization of our size would be challenged to operate without a virtualization layer.” “Rent-A-Center would not be able to deliver what the business is asking of IT without the tools we get from VMware today,” Conroy summed up. “We would not be able to deliver Point of Sale systems, mobility systems, and many of our other systems. We would have a much harder time meeting the needs of the business than we do today.”