

Hewlett Packard Enterprise



Objective

Obtain rapid ROI and support growth

Approach

Engage HPE partner, OnX, to implement HPE Converged Infrastructure for mission-critical requirements and rely on HPE Technology Services for superb scalability and low TCO

IT Matters

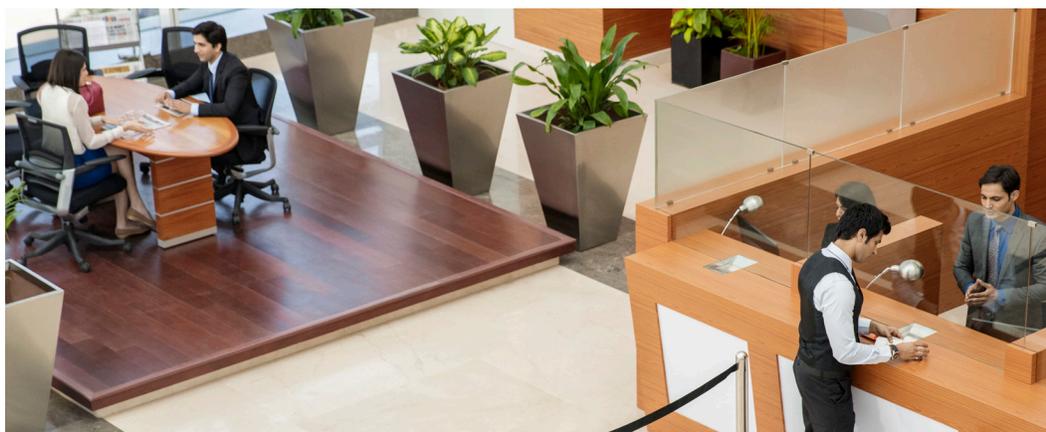
- Deploys simplified, scalable converged infrastructure
- Relies on HPE and OnX for expert guidance in designing, implementing, and supporting solution
- Eases management with solutions such as Intelligent Management Center
- Obtains peace of mind with HPE Proactive Care and dedicated HPE Account Support Manager

Business Matters

- Supports steady, rapid company growth through scalability
- Saves thousands per year, spurring rapid ROI
- Establishes DR for continuous business operations
- Relies on robust infrastructure for mission-critical application uptime

HPE lends competitive edge to The Colonial Companies

HPE Converged Infrastructure supports steady growth at large mortgage loan servicer



The Colonial Companies is one of the largest mortgage loan servicers in the United States. Facing rapid expansion, the company needed to update an aging infrastructure. HPE and partner OnX provided an HPE Converged Infrastructure comprising HPE networking solutions, servers, and storage.

Headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, The Colonial Companies began in 1952 when James S. DuBose founded Fort Worth Mortgage to provide resident home loans to the growing post-war communities of North Central Texas. Today, Colonial is one of the largest servicers of mortgage loans in the United States, with a portfolio exceeding \$25 billion. The company has received numerous awards for service and financial stability, and strives to maintain its stellar reputation.

“Our all-HPE upgrade has positioned us well for the future. We can be more competitive and go after more business that we couldn’t in the past because our IT systems could not handle it.”

— Mike Drzycimski, director of network operations, The Colonial Companies

A must: maintaining customer service levels

When the financial services market hit a historic low in 2008, many smaller loan companies began selling off mortgages. Colonial saw an opportunity and began purchasing many of them, spurring 30% year-over-year growth—as well as the need to aggregate them into a cohesive operating infrastructure. To maintain service levels, The Colonial Companies has had to continually update its IT infrastructure.

As growth continued, Colonial needed more capacity, scalability, and power to integrate acquisitions and support business-critical processes such as loan origination and processing, accessible through Citrix and VMware virtual hosts. Just when Colonial needed to accommodate exponential expansion, it was reliant on an aging network infrastructure that was designed more for voice than for data traffic and a storage solution that could not offer enterprise-level scalability and redundancy. Reliable Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) server blades were already in use, but they needed to be upgraded to improve performance. An added frustration was website performance.

“The customer experience on our website left room for improvement. When the site went down, we had to reboot and reset our web servers, causing lengthy delays and customer frustration,” says Mike Drzycimski, director of network operations for The Colonial Companies. “The main problem was

our network infrastructure: It wasn’t capable of handling high levels of data and other network traffic. We were experiencing hours of outages—an unacceptable outcome for an institution like Colonial.”

Adding to the challenge, Colonial needed to establish solid disaster recovery (DR) capabilities to avoid data loss across 24 locations and help ensure compliance with a growing list of government regulations for financial services firms. All of these requirements needed to be met at a reasonable price with low total cost of ownership (TCO), and with a partner that would take full responsibility for uptime, performance, streamlined management, and unfailing support.

Searching for a one-source provider

Colonial researched multiple vendors and brought in third-party consultants to evaluate different solutions. One vendor offered network solutions and brought in a partner for storage. This proposed option proved too expensive, delaying return on investment. Another also provided network solutions, but lacked a partner for servers and storage.

When considering network solutions in particular, Colonial and the third-party consultants wanted a solution that would provide excellent performance and availability for Citrix thin clients and VMware. They tested this capability among competing

vendors and wrapped their findings into an overall recommendation. Ultimately, Colonial chose HPE due to its ability to deliver on performance requirements and provide everything needed for an end-to-end, single-vendor infrastructure upgrade in the form of an integrated, one-stop converged infrastructure solution.

The converged infrastructure approach from HPE was attractive for Colonial because it would simplify implementation and management for low TCO, optimize availability and scalability, and maximize the value of high-performance connectivity and processing. This translated into better customer experiences and business outcomes, as well as lowered risks and operational costs.

“We looked at several proposals, but we really wanted a vendor that could provide all the pieces of our upgrade puzzle. As we did our investigation, the clear choice was HPE,” Drzycimski says. “An added bonus: HPE came in at about two-thirds the cost of the other major competitor and partner, enabling us to achieve rapid ROI. Industry analysts, including Gartner, validated our decision to go with HPE.”

Once Colonial decided on HPE, the in-house IT team brought in HPE Technology Services Consulting to evaluate several in-depth design alternatives for both the main data center and DR site. During the sessions, consultants white-boarded how HPE solutions would be configured across the main site in Fort Worth and the DR site across town in the Dallas metropolitan area.

Enterprise-class, expansion-ready

The solution, implemented by HPE partner OnX, comprises HPE 3PAR StoreServ Storage, HPE FlexFabric 5900 and 12500 Switch Series at the main data center and DR site. Central to the solution is HPE Intelligent Management Center (IMC) for centralized, streamlined management.

To improve network resilience, reliability, and scalability, Colonial is using HPE Intelligent Resilient Framework (IRF). IRF allows Colonial to overcome the scalability limitations of legacy network designs by providing rapid failover for the company’s mission-critical applications and dramatically improving network utilization and performance. With IRF, Colonial has dramatically simplified the design and operations of its data centers, resulting in improved scalability and lower TCO. Also included is an HPE BladeSystem c7000 Enclosure with HPE ProLiant BL460c Gen8 Server Blades. HPE’s ongoing involvement includes HPE Proactive Care Support for storage and server products and Proactive Care with the Personalized Support option for HPE Networking solutions with 6-hour call to repair.

“We were impressed by the ease of centralized management with IMC and IRF’s ability to connect our core switches through one IP address for greater network resiliency and scalability,” says Drzycimski. “On the storage and server side, HPE 3PAR StoreServ and HPE ProLiant Gen8 Server Blades provided an enterprise-class, high-performing solution.”

Since implementing the HPE Converged Infrastructure solution, Colonial has seen greatly improved reliability, with zero unplanned downtime. Drzycimski notes that everything is running very well, with exceptional capacity and performance.

The HPE solution has throughput to spare, enabling virtual servers to deliver faster response times that translate to better responsiveness for customers. Capacity is enhanced as well, translating to cost savings of thousands of dollars per year, not to mention the ability to support expanded business functions. Previously, Colonial’s IT staff ran roughly six virtual machines (VMs) per physical host. That number has now doubled in most cases to 12 VMs per host.

Case study

The Colonial
Companies

Industry

Financial services

Customer at a glance

Application

- Loan origination and processing software
- Accounting software
- Digital Imaging
- Exchange Server 2010
- VMware vSphere 5.1, Server 2012 R2, 2012, 2008 R2
- Citrix XenApp 6.5, Server 2008 R2

Hardware

- HPE 3PAR StoreServ storage
- HPE 12500 and HPE 5900 Switch Series (Data Center)
- HPE 5500 and 5100 Switch Series (Campus Buildings and Branch Offices)
- HPE BladeSystem c7000 Enclosure with HPE ProLiant server blades
- HPE ProLiant BL460c Gen8 Server Blades

Software

- HPE Intelligent Management Center

HPE services

- HPE Technology Services Consulting
- HPE Technology Services Proactive Care with Personalized Support option and 6-hour call to repair

Reliability, backed by world-class support

As a financial services firm, support looms large in ensuring always-on availability of customer-facing touch points such as the website, as well as ongoing mission-critical processes such as loan origination. To maintain its well-earned reputation for exceptional customer service, Colonial relies on HPE.

“We wanted to rest assured that we could make one call and have our problem fixed right away or get the right person on the phone in short order,” Drzycimski says. “In the past, we had one firmware issue with some interface cards. HPE corrected the issue immediately.”

Prepared for the future

Although the refinancing boom has slowed, growth at Colonial continues at a steady rate. As the company continues expanding, it looks for ways to advance, simplify, and scale its IT infrastructure to keep pace. Initiatives include phasing out older storage-area network equipment and replacing it with additional HPE 3PAR StoreServ systems, potentially making the DR facility its primary data center, and introducing new, more modern loan origination and accounting systems. All of these advancements are made possible by the HPE Converged Infrastructure solution.

“Our all-HPE upgrade has positioned us well for the future,” says Drzycimski. “We can be more competitive and go after more business that we couldn’t in the past because our IT systems could not handle it. Now we can and we can grab more of the market, including expanding into other areas of the country.”



Sign up for updates

★ Rate this document



© Copyright 2014-2015 Hewlett Packard Enterprise Development LP. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for HPE products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. HPE shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.

4AA5-4563ENW, November 2015, Rev. 1