Bellevue Group doubles virtual desktop speed with Cisco HyperFlex

For More Information

For more information about the Cisco HyperFlex platform, visit http://www.cisco.com/go/hyperflex

Bellevue Group is an independent financial services company listed on the Swiss stock exchange. Institutional and individual investors hire Bellevue because of its insightful investment recommendations and expert asset management. Employees work at the company's Küsnacht headquarters and branch offices in Zurich, Frankfurt, London, New York, and Curaçao.

Challenge: needed high-performance desktops

The company's traders and portfolio managers act swiftly in response to breaking news like financial earnings reports and market changes.

"We need very fast desktops," says Holger Schultes, head of IT for Bellevue Group.

Traders need to see real-time market data to execute trades for clients at the best possible prices. Researchers work with sophisticated spreadsheet models to make buy and sell recommendations—the very next morning after companies release their financial results.

"If a researcher is watching the monitor for a long time while Excel calculates, we have a problem," Schultes adds.

Bellevue provides virtual desktops for traders, researchers, and portfolio managers to avoid work interruptions from desktop problems. Initially, the virtual desktops lived on the company's Cisco® Unified Computing System™ (Cisco UCS®) servers. The system also hosts more than 200 virtual servers, including core banking, trading and risk management, and the Cisco video and voice systems.
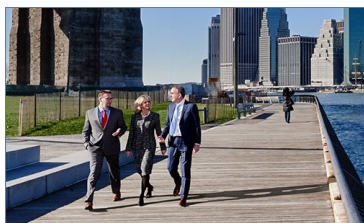
As Bellevue grew and connected to new exchanges, the virtual desktops needed more capacity. The company had two good options: upgrade Cisco UCS or complement it with a Cisco HyperFlex™ System.

Solution: host virtual desktops on Cisco HyperFlex System

Bellevue ordered Cisco HyperFlex System soon after hearing about it from Cisco partner NetCloud.

"Cisco HyperFlex is the simplest VDI platform available," says Schultes. "We didn't have to worry about connecting storage because it's in the same appliance. We didn't even have to learn a new management interface because we already used Cisco UCS Manager."
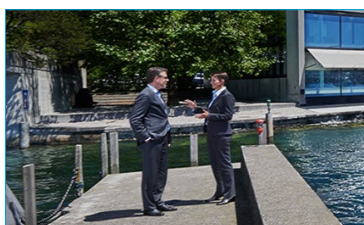
With Cisco HyperFlex, Bellevue Group:

Doubled the speed of complex spreadsheet calculations

Easily adds new users and applications

Uses a familiar management interface

Setup was straightforward: the installer software automated most of the hardware and VMware software configuration. Then Bellevue quickly provisioned virtual desktops with Citrix XenDesktop and began streaming applications with Citrix XenApp.

Excel calculations doubled in speed

Now traders and researchers log in from a zero client each morning to check out a Windows 10 desktop with all of their applications.

"Traders and researchers immediately noticed the faster performance after we moved our VDI to Cisco HyperFlex," Schultes says. "Complex Excel calculations completed twice as fast."

Servers configure themselves

Each Cisco HyperFlex System has three nodes—enough capacity for the next two years. At that point Bellevue can scale the system by simply connecting new nodes.

With Cisco UCS Manager, configuring a new server is as simple as clicking to apply a service profile. IT won't have to redistribute desktops and data across the nodes because Cisco HyperFlex does it automatically.

Next steps: virtual desktops for all

Other Bellevue employees may soon begin working on virtual desktops. The IT team can configure the Cisco HyperFlex System to support any type of application. For applications that require more processing power, the IT team will add compute-only nodes. For graphics-heavy applications like Adobe® Photoshop® software and Bloomberg Terminal, IT will add NVIDIA GRID graphics cards.

"We have a use case for virtual desktops for every employee in the bank, and HyperFlex can support them all," Schultes adds.

Products and Services

Unified Computing

- Cisco HyperFlex HX240c M4 Node
- Cisco Unified Computing System
  - Cisco UCS B200 and B250 Blade Servers
  - Cisco UCS C220 and C240 Rack-Mount Servers

Cloud and Systems Management

- Cisco UCS Manager

Virtualization

- VMware vSphere 6.0U2
- Citrix XenDesktop 7.12
- Citrix XenApp 7.12
- Microsoft App-V 5.1

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