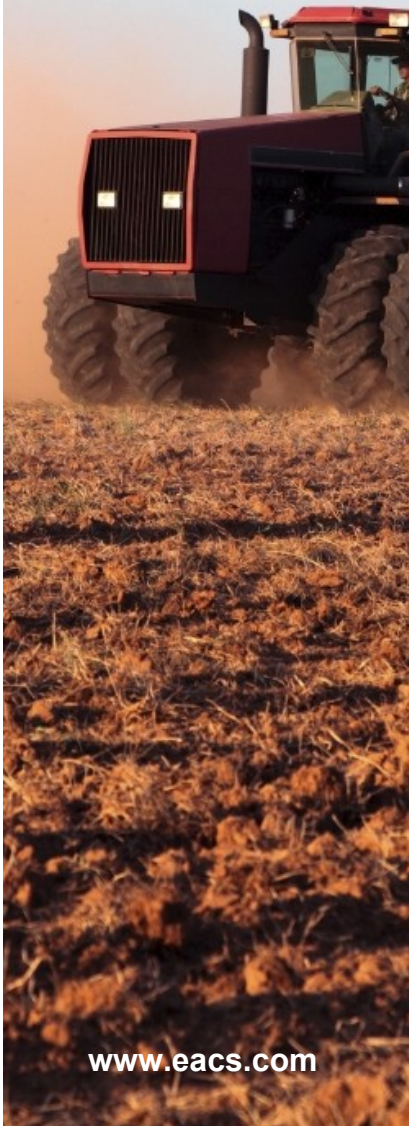


# Server Virtualisation with J&H Bunn



***“We have a long-standing relationship with our IT partner, EACS. When we came to them with our problem and they suggested server virtualisation from VMware, we were very willing to listen.”***

Tim Mustill, Group IT Manager, J&H Bunn



Family owned since its inception in 1816, J&H Bunn blends and sells fertilisers to farmers and agricultural merchants throughout the UK. It is the UK's largest independent fertiliser producer with other interests in chemicals, haulage and contracting. Operating from its head office in Great Yarmouth, it employs more than 150 people across 10 locations in the UK.

J&H Bunn has been responsible for the most significant innovations in its industry over the last forty years. Over the past 14 years, the company has witnessed considerable growth and has now just under 100 laptops and PCs in circulation. The IT function is run entirely from the head office in Great Yarmouth, with only one full-time IT person employed across the group, in addition to the CTO.

Before embarking on its virtualisation project, J&H Bunn faced similar problems to a lot of successful organisations. The business had seen considerable growth, but its IT infrastructure was struggling to keep pace. As more and more applications were added to the network, it decided its traditional approach to IT was not sustainable: “We were running over 10 physical servers, but fast growth and other large impending IT projects meant that within a year, we would have had to double our server capacity and quadruple storage. We knew then that we had to look for alternative options to a physical server infrastructure,” says Tim Mustill, Group IT Manager at J&H Bunn.

With such a small IT department it was important for Mustill to reduce the time spent on the day-to-day running of the IT infrastructure: “Before virtualising, I spent every day focused on keeping our IT up and running, with little capacity to be strategic and look at how we can align IT more with business.”

In addition to the need for hardware consolidation to reduce costs, J&H Bunn was also concerned with the impact its growing server farm had on the environment, with power consumption a particular concern.

As more and more people in the company became dependent on the IT infrastructure to do their work, business continuity and disaster recovery was also a key consideration.

## **The Solution**

J&H Bunn knew it needed a reliable, highly available and scalable infrastructure and decided to investigate the potential benefits of server virtualisation. “We have a long-standing relationship with our IT partner, EACS, and, when we came to them with our problem and they suggested server virtualisation from VMware, we were very willing to listen,” says Mustill. “As the market leader in virtualisation, VMware was a logical choice. The combination between VMware, NetApp and a Microsoft network seemed a perfect fit for us.”

In October 2009, J&H Bunn worked with EACS to implement VMware vSphere, virtualising the majority of its server environment and avoiding the purchase of 10 new servers as a result. Part of this included EACS designing and developing templates for J&H Bunn to assist in the deployment of new virtual machines. It now operates 18 virtual machines and has virtualised 85% of its IT environment.

***“We forecast a saving of up to £47,000 over five years, which will have a hugely positive impact on our business. Our business continuity capabilities have improved, our power consumption has been dramatically reduced but, most satisfying of all, is the ease with which our IT environment can now be managed.”***

Tim Mustill, Group IT Manager, J & H Bunn



With reducing power consumption and increasing resilience a key driver for the move to virtualisation, one of the key features of vSphere that J&H Bunn has taken advantage of is Distributed Resource Scheduling (DRS). DRS continuously monitors utilisation across resource pools and intelligently allocates available resources among virtual machines according to business needs. It also increases energy efficiency by running fewer servers and dynamically powering down unused servers using Distributed Power Management (DPM).

“DRS is just one of the ways in which virtualising our server environment will help us run a more efficient IT infrastructure and save money as a result. Over five years we expect to see savings on hardware, electricity and licensing totalling up to £47,000, which is substantial for a company our size,” says Mustill. Similarly, the High Availability feature within vSphere has dramatically improved J&H Bunn’s business continuity and resilience capabilities by reducing the amount of downtime it suffers in the event of a server failure, and eliminating planned downtime for many common maintenance issues.

“My biggest worry was what would happen if our Exchange Server broke down. In the past we would have to order a new server, wait for it to turn up, configure and test it, which could have meant up to a week without email! Now, if we have a hardware failure, we just move to another virtual server. This means the downtime is reduced from around a week to about ten minutes, which makes a huge difference to our recovery capabilities.”

“Managing our server environment is

so easy that I now only need five minutes in the morning to check the health of the system using vCenter. Furthermore, provisioning new applications takes no more than half an hour. Being the only IT person in the company, this has finally freed up my time to be more strategic and work on how we can use IT to drive the business forward.”

### Results

- Reduced server estate and avoided a 100% increase in servers over one year
- Built reliable and scalable IT infrastructure that can support large impending IT deployments, including new ERP and Payroll systems
- Improved business continuity and disaster recovery
- Simplified server management and substantially freed-up time of IT Manager
- Forecasted hardware, licensing and electricity savings of up to £47,000 within five years
- Applications virtualised on server include: Microsoft SQL 2005/2008, Microsoft Exchange 2007, Sharepoint 2007, Blackberry Enterprise Server, Specialist recipe management software, Sage Payroll

In addition to the virtualisation project, J&H Bunn is also in the process of implementing a new payroll system and considering ERP options; “Our new motto is: whatever can be virtualised, will be virtualised. Looking at the ERP system specifically, without virtualisation we might need five high end servers, whereas if we virtualise, we only require two running as vSphere hosts. Virtualising such an important

system just goes to show the faith we have in the performance and reliability of the virtualised environment.” Tim Mustill, Group IT Manager, J&H Bunn.

Server virtualisation has also enabled J&H Bunn to explore other ways in which to improve its IT operations. While most office staff (around 30 permanent employees) are based in the head office, the majority of other sites across the UK, which have on average between six and eight staff, each have a small server. “We are looking into how we can virtualise these servers to provide easier remote management from a central location and also use virtualisation to improve our disaster recovery plans for these remote offices. Without virtualising this is something we could not have envisaged.”

“The ease of use has really surprised me and the fact that things that would have previously taken us weeks can now be done within minutes makes a massive difference to my workload,” concludes Mustill. “vSphere has given us a scalable, reliable IT infrastructure that not only saves us a lot of money, but also brings vast efficiency and green benefits” concludes Mustill. “We’re excited about exploring further the huge potential benefits we know are on offer.”



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