Avanade Delivers on the "Elastic Datacenter" Vision

Partner: Avanade
Website: www.avanade.com
Partner Size: 10,700 employees
Country or Region: North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific
Industry: Professional services—IT services

Partner Profile
Avanade is a global IT consultancy dedicated to using the Microsoft platform to help enterprises achieve profitable growth. Avanade was formed in 2000 as a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Avanade won Core Infrastructure Solutions, Virtualization Partner of the Year in 2010.

Software and Services
- Technologies
  - Hyper-V
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Windows Server 2008 R2
- Microsoft System Center
  - Microsoft System Center Data Protection Manager
  - Microsoft System Center Operations Manager
  - Microsoft System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008 R2

For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit: www.microsoft.com/casestudies

"The Elastic Datacenter is enabling our customers to realize significant cost savings while helping them improve IT resilience and agility."

Darren Brown, Project Manager, Avanade

Business Needs

Formed in 2000 as a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft, Avanade is a business technology services provider that is dedicated to using the Microsoft platform to help enterprises achieve profitable growth.

Through its experience in delivering IT solutions, Avanade has found that, when it comes to the data center, many companies focus on dealing with immediate issues rather than developing a holistic IT strategy that improves operational efficiency and supports growth. To move away from this reactive mode of IT and achieve newfound levels of agility, Avanade believes organizations should follow a data-center strategy focused on achieving a dynamic, manageable, and secure IT infrastructure.

By taking this approach, Avanade has helped numerous customers undergo core infrastructure optimization efforts to achieve an "Elastic Datacenter." One such customer, a U.K.-based energy provider, first called on the expertise of Avanade after realizing the growing inefficiencies associated with maintaining separate server rooms at each of its power stations, which were managed separately from the company's core IT activities. Adding further complication, the applications at each of the power stations were mission-critical and had to remain on-site to ensure continuous operation of the power station.

Another customer, a subsea engineering and construction company, faced a common scenario: It was moving offices and needed to establish a datacenter at the new location. In building this new data center, the customer aimed to consolidate servers to drive down costs.

And most recently, one of Avanade's customers looked at the prospect of moving from VMware to a Microsoft-based environment to achieve a lower total-cost-of-ownership. In all three of these situations, taking a best-in-class approach would be vital.

Solution

To address customer needs, the Elastic Datacenter goes beyond simply being a set of technologies to be what Avanade refers to as "a general cross-industry proposition that defines an architectural vision and blueprint for how a best-in-

class data-center infrastructure platform should be structured and operated by using Microsoft technologies." In short, the Elastic Datacenter approach spans both infrastructure and operations.

In the case of the energy provider, this approach has proved particularly effective. Beginning with a proof of concept at one power station, the energy provider worked with Avanade to build an authentic copy of the network in a sandbox environment, eliminating the risk of interfering with power station operations. By using a virtualized server platform running Windows Server 2008 R2, Hyper-V technology, and Microsoft System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008 R2, Avanade then migrated the company's specialized applications and consolidated a number of Microsoft SQL Server databases. The new architecture reduced the number of physical servers, simplified remote monitoring and management, and provided failover and resilience between the servers. But the proof of concept wasn't just about proving the technology. Avanade also presented a detailed business case that compared Hyper-V with other virtualization technology and showed how the energy provider could achieve its business goals.

For the subsea engineering and construction company, Avanade carried out a pilot project to verify that Hyper-V technology was ready for deployment in a business-critical environment and that the company's systems would migrate to it smoothly. Working closely with experts at Microsoft and the engineering and construction company, Avanade consultants identified 14 physical servers out of 24 that were candidates for virtualization. These included Active Directory domain controllers; file, print and email servers; SQL Server–based servers; and various, proprietary line-of-business applications. The teams then built a representative Hyper-V environment and performed test migrations by moving some of the real servers into the test environment.

For the customer moving off VMware, Avanade is poised to complete the project over the course of 12 months. During this period, Avanade U.K.'s infrastructure-consulting practice, which works closely with its Hyper-V migration factory, will migrate approximately 1,600 physical and VMware virtual servers to an environment that takes advantage of Windows Server and Hyper-V.

Benefits

Through its Elastic Datacenter solution, Avanade continues to help companies optimize their core infrastructures. By using a unique mix of technology and consulting expertise, the company helps customers' IT teams deliver on-demand enterprise services that improve the bottom line, promote innovation, and reduce business risk

Build Solid Revenue

The Elastic Datacenter solution has proven to be a successful offering for Avanade. The company has found that its work, wins, and assets for the Elastic Datacenter are effectively driving market adoption of virtualization from Microsoft. And the company has found that other enterprise companies are actively seeking its methods and approach, presenting a sizeable revenue opportunity.

Deliver Efficiencies and Savings to Customers

Aside from being good business for Avanade, the Elastic Datacenter helps the company's customers achieve tangible benefits.

For the energy provider, it has proven more resource, size, and power-efficient. And if replicated across seven power stations, it will cut the number of servers by 75 percent. Not only does this reduce the capital budget, but it also means lower maintenance and management costs. Additional benefits include the following:

- By using Hyper-V, the customer consolidated its SQL Server databases to be more efficient, equating to an 88 percent savings in SQL Server licensing costs.
- Avanade demonstrated how Hyper-V has lower licensing costs than its main competitor, VMware.
- With Hyper-V in place, the company's IT department deployed new virtual servers in a matter of hours and at no extra cost.
- The customer estimates that Avanade and Hyper-V could save the company £1 million to £2 million (approximately U.S.$1.5 million to $3 million) over the next three years.

In the case of the subsea engineering and construction company, the pilot was a success, proving that Hyper-V and System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008 R2 could support the company's business-critical systems. It also provided a compelling business case for migrating the company's other data centers, including some on ships, to Hyper-V. Based on this project, Avanade expects to help the customer generate savings in excess of £114,000 (approximately $171,735) a year in licensing and operational costs. In addition, by replacing 14 physical servers, the project will help the customer reduce energy and cooling costs and its environmental impact.

As for the company migrating 1,600 servers from VMware to the Microsoft-based environment that includes Windows Server 2008 and Hyper-V, the customer expects to save £6 million (approximately $9 million).

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