the customer overview

customer
Paul Smith

website
www.paulsmith.co.uk

number of employees
Approx 1200

country or region
Global (Head Office, Nottingham, United Kingdom)

industry
Retail

customer profile
Nottingham-based designer Paul Smith showed his first menswear collection in Paris under the Paul Smith label in 1976. Today, there are 14 different collections—produced in England and Italy—under the Paul Smith brand. In addition to the company’s 17 shops in England, Paul Smith shops are found in fashion capitals around the world, including 200 locations in Japan.
“While we have made great progress with optimizing our data centers, and the level of service that IT delivers to the business is already high, we are always interested in the latest technologies to improve efficiency, lower costs, and better serve the business.”

Lee Bingham, Head of IT, Paul Smith

“We had come a long way, but we wanted to drive down costs even more— the physical servers, the power, the hardware maintenance—by virtualizing up to 80 percent of all our servers.”

Lee Bingham, Head of IT, Paul Smith
Plans for Private Cloud Once it moves its non-virtualized workloads into a virtual environment, Paul Smith plans to exploit the additional agility and automation benefits that it would get by building private clouds. IT staff can enable a more responsive, on-demand allocation of pooled IT resources—such as applications, networks, servers, storage, and services—for employees to use when and where they are needed. “We see private cloud as the next step in our virtualization journey,” says Bingham. “Building a private cloud infrastructure will enable us to be more agile in responding to business and end-user requirements, through self-service capabilities and automation. We wanted the best technology in place to make that a reality.”

the problem

Paul Smith was unable to virtualize applications that were based on Microsoft SQL Server data management software and certain important line-of-business applications, such as Cognos, the company’s business intelligence solution, because of their criticality and performance requirements. “We had to keep some applications running in a physical environment because Hyper-V in Windows Server 2008 R2 supports virtual machines with a maximum of four virtual processors and 64 gigabytes of memory,” says Bingham. “We needed a more scalable virtualization solution so we could reach that 80 percent benchmark of virtualized servers in our data centers.”

“Paul Smith used a mixture of NIC vendors and there were timeconsuming compatibility issues that forced us to segment network configuration among cluster hosts,”

change of business needs
the solution

In March 2012, Paul Smith joined the Rapid Deployment Program (RDP) for the Windows Server 2012 operating system. The company wanted to use the more flexible and powerful virtualization technologies within Windows Server 2012 to improve IT service to the business, realize cost savings, and boost operational efficiencies. Paul Smith IT staff members worked with risual to evaluate Hyper-V in Windows Server 2012 and work out a strategy to transform the data centers into a cloud platform capable of supporting large, high-performance virtual machines.

Paul Smith can use Hyper-V in Windows Server 2012, which supports up to 64 virtual processors and 1 terabyte of memory for each virtual machine, to virtualize Cognos and other processing-intensive applications.

The IT teams at Paul Smith and risual will use Hyper-V Replica at all Tier 2 sites. This feature of Windows Server 2012 provides a storage-agnostic and workload-agnostic solution that replicates virtual machines between two locations for business continuity.

System administrators at Paul Smith are also interested in using the live migration and storage migration capabilities in Hyper-V to move multiple active virtual machines and virtual hard disks between physical hosts or storage locations with no downtime.

Paul Smith also plans to deploy Microsoft System Center 2012 to further automate and help manage its virtual and physical environments as it moves toward building a private cloud.
With Windows Server 2012, Paul Smith has a complete virtualization solution to introduce cloud computing in its data centers, including the high-density and performance capabilities required to expand its virtualized environment, contain costs, and drive business agility.

Created Scalable Virtualization Platform Paul Smith is using Windows Server 2012 to achieve its goal of virtualizing up to 80 percent of its servers.

By the end of 2012, Paul Smith will have a virtualized production environment configured to handle any expected workloads well into the future.

Increased Performance by 10 Percent Not only is Paul Smith virtualizing its business-critical applications such as Cognos, but with Windows Server 2012, it is also improving the performance of these applications.

Increased Density by Almost 200 Percent Prior to deploying Windows Server 2012, each Hyper-V server hosted 28 virtual machines.

Reduced Costs by $1.8 Million in First Year As a result of increasing the density and computing power of virtual machines, Paul Smith was able to reduce hardware acquisition and maintenance costs.
“Paul Smith used a mixture of NIC vendors and there were timeconsuming compatibility issues that forced us to segment network configuration among cluster hosts.”

Richard Proud, Co-Founder and Director, Risual

“The new version of Hyper-V has capabilities and features that Paul Smith can use to increase the density and performance of virtual machines per server. It also has better memory management capabilities and efficient tools to further optimize their data centers and reduce administration overhead.”

Richard Proud, Co-Founder and Director, Risual

By the end of 2012, we’ll have virtualized 40 of them that we have identified as high priority and then we will continue on with virtualization through the rest of 2013 to achieve our 80 percent virtualization benchmark.”

Richard Proud, Co-Founder and Director, Risual
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