The top five benefits of server virtualization

*There’s never been a better time to consider this valuable operational enhancement*

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Virtualization is a proven software technology that is rapidly transforming the IT landscape and fundamentally changing the way that people compute. Virtualization allows you to enhance the way your IT environment operates. It simplifies the physical infrastructure, providing centralized management and better flexibility for resource sharing. From data centers to desktops, virtualization lets banks pool and share IT resources centrally and standardize computer deployment and resources so data is more secure.

For years, bankers have been watching and waiting for the definitive direction of virtualization. Although the technology isn’t new, there has been a delay in adoption for reasons ranging from an overall lack of knowledge about the benefits, to banks fearing a shift in their day-to-day operations.

Today, virtualization technology is maturing and the tangible benefits are being realized – and the timing couldn’t be better. In the recent uncertain economic environment, the industry-wide virtualization initiative is generating immediate and ongoing operating efficiencies and cost savings for many banks nationwide. And more and more banks are progressively plugging in.

Below are the top five reasons banks are implementing server virtualization.

1. **Get more out of resources**

With virtualization, banks can pool common infrastructure resources and break the legacy “one application to one server” model with server consolidation. Virtualization can dramatically reduce the number of physical servers and dynamically redistribute excess computing power to where it is needed most. As the processing power of today’s servers continues to increase, it is now easier than ever for one more powerful server to replace multiple smaller servers.

Reducing the number of physical servers also reduces ongoing energy requirements, making it a more environmentally friendly way of doing business. This option is attractive to banks that are adopting “green” business practices.

2. **Reduce data center costs**
Cost reduction is one of the primary reasons banks are increasingly taking advantage of virtualization. Virtualization requires fewer servers and related IT hardware and can reduce real estate, power, and cooling requirements. It also provides more efficient management tools, which can enable banks to improve their server-to-admin ratio and even reduce personnel requirements. And looking at the big picture, virtualization dramatically reduces the hassle and costs associated with ongoing hardware maintenance.

**3. Enhance availability and security**

Virtualization increases availability of hardware and applications, improving business continuity and disaster recovery. It enables banks to securely backup and migrate entire virtual environments with practically no interruption in their day-to-day operations. With virtualization, banks can eliminate planned downtime and recover quickly from unplanned business interruptions.

**4. Gain operational flexibility**

Virtualization enables banks to respond to market changes with dynamic resource management, faster server provisioning and improved desktop application deployment. Banks need to be able to change software and add new products in a reasonable time frame. With a virtual server infrastructure, they can do this without having to find new hardware, order it, and wait on having it shipped to the bank. If you have the growth room in your setup you can configure and test without having to wait for equipment.

**5. Improved desktop management and security**

Virtualization provides environments that users can access locally or remotely, with or without a network connection on almost any standard desktop, laptop, tablet PC, or device. With desktop virtualization, banks can secure and manage desktops from one centralized location. Using simple management tools, all desktops can be configured the same and the data is stored at a data center to help ensure that security and backup policy requirements are upheld.

**Getting started with virtualization**

Banks that are interested in getting started with virtualization should begin the process with discovery and planning. It’s important to analyze the current operating environment and use that information to decide how and where virtualization should be utilized.

**Discovery** – First, take inventory of your entire environment, including servers, workstations, and switches. Monitor the performance of your environment, which includes building a history of performance for servers, diagramming what each workstation needs physically, and tracking performance of bandwidth locally on wide area networks.
Planning – Review your discovery documentation, and determine what elements of your environment are good candidates for virtualization. Determine your future needs in areas such as management, disaster recovery, and cost savings. And make sure you’re working with a trusted and proven vendor that is experienced with evaluating and implementing virtualized environments. Look for a vendor that offers custom network solutions and consultation that support virtualization, server consolidation, storage, communications, conversions, and migrations.

Server virtualization can generate significant cost and time saving benefits to banks. If you haven’t researched how this operational enhancement can help your bank save money, improve disaster recovery, and simplify day-to-day processes, there’s never been a better time than right now. Around the world, companies of all sizes are benefiting from virtualization - don’t be left behind!

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