Cable ONE aces data center move with Datalink

Industry:
Telecommunications

Location:
Phoenix, Arizona

Solution:
Datalink data center relocation services

Datalink services:
- Application mapping
- Relocation management and resources
- Migration planning, execution, and knowledge transfer
- Logistics planning and project management

Benefits:
- No disruption to Cable ONE business
- All move activities completed during off-hours
- Virtualization reduced data center footprint by two-thirds
- Tier III facility strengthened security and business continuity
- Additional space available to accommodate data growth
- Project completed ahead of deadline and under budget
- Expert methodology ensured smooth migration

The client: Cable ONE

Cable One, Inc. (NYSE: CABO) is among the 10 largest cable companies in the United States. Serving nearly 700,000 customers in 19 states with high-speed Internet, cable television and telephone service, Cable ONE provides consumers with a wide range of the latest products and services, including wireless Internet service, high-definition programming and phone service in the continental U.S.

The challenges: Move two petabytes of data with no business disruption

Cable ONE was consolidating 2,100 employees from three buildings into a new headquarters location in Phoenix. As part of the move, the production data center was to be relocated to a hosted environment at the nearby Tier III-certified IO data center with space at the new corporate headquarters to be used as a disaster recovery site. That required moving two petabytes of data to the IO facility.

In preparation, the team launched virtualization and application rationalization initiatives that reduced the server footprint from 1,100 to 700, and trimmed the number of applications to be migrated from 250 to 133. Executing the actual move, however, required precision planning to reduce the risk of errors and interruptions to business operations. Cable ONE's 55-person IT team had neither the time nor the experience executing large data center moves to do it alone.

"Only one member of our team had participated in a move of this scale, and we knew we needed more manpower and experience to both plan the project and carry it out," said Cary Westmark, Vice President of Information Technology. "Otherwise, we ran a high risk of impacting activities like service provisioning, bill payment and support requests, and that was unacceptable."

"Every IT team has limited resources, and getting the right help at the right time can make all the difference in fulfilling your responsibilities."

ZERO

Visible outages or business interruptions.

47% decrease of applications to be migrated

datalink

An Insight company

datalink.com | insight.com

The solution: Planning, project management, and online migration by Datalink

After evaluating multiple candidates, Cable ONE selected Datalink as its relocation partner because of strong client references, a deep knowledge of relocation processes, and a Datalink-developed application mapping methodology that dictates the blueprint for every move.

With that methodology, all applications are inventoried, technology dependencies are identified, and that information is used to determine which applications can be safely moved together without affecting other systems. This ensures that servers are uninstalled and reinstalled in the optimal sequence, dramatically reducing the potential for complications.

Over the next seven months, Datalink leveraged its proprietary software tool to map upstream and downstream application dependencies at Cable ONE. These application dependencies were used to build a strategy for moving application bundles every six to eight weeks, minimizing downtime as well as mitigating risk. Datalink also provided overall program management services with multiple teams of project managers and consultants who handled different work streams at different times.

With the exception of hardware, most of Cable ONE's assets were moved over the network utilizing a variety of migration methodologies including physical to physical, virtual to virtual, host level, and database replication. These online moves reduced outage windows and prevented cascading impacts that can be caused by long intervals between cutovers of interdependent applications. Move events took place overnight, usually relying on redundant servers to serve up applications as primary systems were switched over so that no more than a few minutes elapsed between old and new site activation.

The benefits: Incident-free transition to secure hosted environment

Both the planning and the staggered move events paid off. Despite the scale and complexity of the project, neither Cable ONE's internal users nor the company's customers suffered any system access problems that affected productivity or customer service. "I don't think anyone outside of IT even knew we had moved the data center because there were no visible outages or business interruptions," Westmark said.

The sequential move strategy also allowed Cable ONE to take the reins of the project midway through the move schedule because of the skills gained working side by side with Datalink personnel during the first few sessions. "Datalink took the lead on the first five move events, but by the sixth we knew the processes and procedures well enough to fly on our own," Westmark noted. "That meant we finished the project early as well as under budget."

It also meant the ability to more quickly take advantage of the security, business continuity, power and monitoring benefits of IO Phoenix, a massive 538,000-square-foot facility with features ranging from steel and reinforced concrete construction to biometric screening, digital surveillance, and multiple levels of redundancy and backup.

"Hundreds of things can go wrong in a data center relocation project if you don't have an accurate roadmap or a team with specific relocation expertise. Even the smallest error can knock users offline for hours and wreak havoc with the business," Westmark said. "Bringing in an experienced data center relocation specialist gave us the tools and team we needed to do the job safely, and it also allowed our internal IT department to stay focused on core business services. Every IT team has limited resources, and getting the right help at the right time can make all the difference in fulfilling your responsibilities."