



Northwest Wholesale Florists Storage Virtualization Software

Overview

Background:

Based in Seattle, Washington, Northwest Wholesale Florists is one of the oldest and most respected wholesalers of floral and floral-related products in the Northwest. For more, visit www.nwwholesaleflorists.com.

Problem:

Needed a solution that would provide a smooth transition as the company moved to a new warehouse.

Solution:

DataCore SANmelody virtual SAN and Windows 2008 Server R2 with Hyper-V utilizing and repurposing the existing HP DL 380 G5 servers.

Microsoft® Windows Server® 2008 R2 with Hyper-V™ and DataCore™ Software's Storage Virtualization Power the New Virtual Infrastructure at this Wholesale Distributor

Family-owned and operated, Northwest Wholesale Florists (NWF) is a distributor of fresh-cut flowers, potted plants and floral supplies in downtown Seattle. "What we have found with the DataCore and Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2 + Hyper-V combination is a virtual infrastructure that is redundant, reliable, flexible and expandable," stated Mary Toupin, Office Manager, Northwest Wholesale Florists. "Moreover, the redundant storage with DataCore complements the redundancy built into the VM system. We are very pleased with the way the system has performed."

A Virtual Infrastructure that Combines Servers and Storage - with Live Migration Functionality

As their trusted technology advisor, NWF relies on the IT counsel and direction from Moose Logic. Moose Logic's recommendation was that what it needed was a more resilient, highly-available system leveraging virtualization and storage area network (SAN) technology, while at the same time improving the performance of NWF's key applications - Macola, Microsoft Exchange, Outlook, Office as well as a few other applications to support point of sale, credit card swipes, etc. The objective was also to improve data protection for NWF - through a backup solution and other measures.

According to Doug Otani, General Manager, Northwest Wholesale Florists, "Our IT environment is now comprised of a virtual infrastructure whereby DataCore SANmelody is deployed in conjunction with a clustered Hyper-V system. With a Windows Server 2008 R2 Hyper-V cluster, our company now has the ability to live migrate our virtual machines (VMs). Because these VMs can "live migrate" between the two hosts, the DataCore-Hyper-V virtual infrastructure minimizes and even eliminates downtime - when we need to do system maintenance."

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- *Mary Toupin, Office Manager, Northwest Wholesale Florists*

The original desire to upgrade its IT infrastructure was driven by the fact that NWF was moving to a new warehouse - and needed to do that while running operations from the existing warehouse. NWF looked to Moose Logic to design a new IT infrastructure system and provide a smooth transition. In this case, Moose Logic thought that there were a number of benefits in deploying Hyper-V, even before the release of Windows Server 2008 R2. However, after the R2 release of Windows Server 2008, Hyper-V has been infused with live migration functionality - which was not in Hyper-V prior to R2. “As a reseller, the combination of DataCore with Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V gives our firm and this customer a lot of flexibility,” commented Scott Gorcester, President, Moose Logic, a solutions provider and DataCore partner in the Pacific Northwest. “Using DataCore storage virtualization combined with Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2 and Hyper-V in joint configurations is already proving to be a great combination for both resellers and users alike.”

Re-purposing Existing Hardware and Deploying Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V

Knowing that there were two sound pieces of hardware that could be re-purposed, Moose Logic recommended a solution based on Windows Server 2008 R2 running Hyper-V. The firm built the customer two Hyper-V servers with System Center Virtual Machine Manager, running in a failover cluster. Coupled with the clustered pair of Hyper-V servers is a pair of DataCore SANmelody servers - one on an existing HP DL 380 G5 that was repurposed after adding new disk drives and more memory and the other on a new HP DL 380 G5 server to match the existing one. These G5 servers became the SAN nodes. This system went live at the customer’s new location on October 1, 2009. Thirty-plus (30+) users benefit from the system daily.

Delivering Peace of Mind and Avoiding Unnecessary Downtime

Scott Gorcester of Moose Logic, who assured the management team at NWF that the Windows 2008 Server with Hyper-V was the right way to go, concluded, “The bottom-line is that with the DataCore and Windows 2008 Server R2 with Hyper-V environment, NWF can weather multiple equipment failures and continue to run its business, which ultimately provides peace of mind because the virtual infrastructure avoids unnecessary downtime.”

Gorcester sees the deployment as having been “very, very successful.” And according to him, the performance and stability of the system have been excellent.

“We have actually had a Hyper-V server fail as a result of the hardware device, which was an easy fix,” explained Gorcester. “It has not happened again, but the thing that was just beautiful was that the VMs auto-migrated and there was no downtime at all. My response to the client was, ‘The bad news is one of your servers failed. The good news is it had zero effect on the operation of your business.’ It was the first time I think I ever went to a client and said, ‘You had a failure.’ And they replied, ‘Wow, it worked perfectly.’”

For more information on storage virtualization, please visit:
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