

CASE STUDY

ED&F MAN PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE WITH A SCALABLE INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTION



OVERVIEW

- Traditional data centre infrastructure was no longer working for global agricultural commodities merchant ED&F Man, resulting in service interruptions, limited flexibility and poor IT performance.
- CDW, in partnership with Dell EMC and VMware helped the organisation design and implement a new solution using VxRail technology powered by VMware vSAN.
- Following the deployment at data centres in London, Miami and Singapore, ED&F Man is now benefitting from greater stability, improved performance and the flexibility to scale up and down according to business demands.

ABOUT ED&F MAN

- Founded in 1783, ED&F Man is an agricultural commodities merchant.
- More than 7,000 employees in 70 countries.
- Annual revenue of \$10bn.
- Sources, stores, ships and distributes products including coffee, sugar, molasses and pulses.

CHALLENGE

Ageing infrastructure was disrupting business continuity at ED&F Man, the global agricultural commodities merchant. The availability of important financial systems, e-commerce ERP and trading platforms was compromised by outdated hardware that was nearing the end of manufacturer support.

As a result, interruptions to critical services had become too frequent. This was an acute problem for areas of the organisation that managed financial transactions and rely on round-the-clock availability across all of its regions.

Global infrastructure services were being delivered primarily from the organisation's London data centre, alongside additional data centres in Miami and Singapore.

The organisation's disaster recovery capabilities were limited, which exacerbated the potential impact of outages.

Additionally, the constraints imposed by the existing infrastructure limited the availability of ED&F Man to respond to changing business needs at a time when mergers and acquisitions required rapid on-boarding of new organisations and associated services.

The restricted scalability of the incumbent solution was exacerbated by the IT team's difficulty in gaining overall visibility of the infrastructure and its performance.

Glyn Turner, Head of Technology Services at ED&F Man, says: "When I joined the organisation in 2016 it was clear that we needed more stability, uptime and flexibility in our infrastructure."

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SOLUTION

Following a competitive tender, CDW was identified as the preferred IT partner to support the necessary infrastructure transformation.

Together they explored Dell EMC's technology portfolio and identified VxRail as the most effective solution. VxRail provides a fully-integrated VMware hyperconverged appliance that is ideally suited to demanding workloads and applications.

The Integrated Technology Solutions team experts at CDW worked on the sizing and design of the new solution, before then supporting the implementation which was carried out by the internal IT team at ED&F Man.

"VxRail was a great fit in terms of what we wanted to achieve," said Glyn. "It provides us with a cloud-like solution within our own infrastructure. The combination of VMware vSAN and Dell EMC PowerEdge servers enables us to simplify IT operations while benefitting from the powerful capabilities of

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a hyperconverged infrastructure."

VxRail with SmartFabric Services supported by Dell EMC Networking switches is the first and only HCI appliance to deliver fully automated network awareness and configuration during set up, cluster expansion and day-to-day management.

Following the successful deployment of VxRail within the organisation's primary data centre in London, ED&F Man worked with CDW on a second implementation at its disaster recovery facility. Software platforms from Dell EMC keep the two sites synchronised, with the disaster recovery data centre replicating its live counterpart.

As a result, fail-over can be completed within five minutes.

Subsequent deployments of Dell EMC VxRail in the organisation's Miami and Singapore data centres have given ED&F Man a global platform that is standardised and repeatable.

By adopting an all-flash solution, ED&F Man was able to reduce its overall data centre footprint while simultaneously providing high-performance compute and storage capabilities.

CDW played a pivotal role in designing these deployments and securing new enterprise agreements with VMware and Microsoft.

OUTCOME

ED&F Man is now benefitting from a far more reliable platform. "In the three months following the refresh of our infrastructure, there has not been a single P1 service-affecting incident," says Glyn. "We now have a fully stable platform that's delivering maximum uptime. Reliability and availability have significantly improved."

A key advantage of the Dell EMC VxRail solution is that continuous monitoring enables proactive identification of any potential issues. "We no longer have users advising us that software is running slow because we are already aware and in most cases the issue is addressed before it becomes a problem," says Glyn.

Improved visibility of the infrastructure is another important advantage. VMware's vROps solution acts quickly to predict any required increase in server resources and similarly enables these to be switched off when periods of high demand have passed.

"With this new infrastructure, we can realistically size our environment and avoid performance bottlenecks," says Glyn. "We

have visibility of what's happening globally and respond. That scalability is extremely valuable and will continue to be so as the organisation changes and grows. We can now respond to the needs of the business very quickly."

Glyn also highlights the role played by CDW during this period of transition. "I deal with people, not businesses, and I absolutely believe in the team at CDW. They provide a very personal service and take ownership of delivering a project. What's more, they consistently go above and beyond to ensure everything is in order."

Lee Hendra, Solutions Director at CDW, says, "Bringing together the very latest advances from Dell EMC and VMware, VxRail gives ED&F Man an infrastructure solution that is fully future-proofed."

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For more information on how CDW can help your organisation prepare for the future, contact:

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