

Cloud Computing for real: with vCloud Director for new business models



"It's critical that we provide our customers with complex virtualized infrastructures very quickly and with a guaranteed SLA. vCloud Director is an excellent tool for this."

— Andreas Wolske, Managing Partner of managedhosting.de

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Challenge

- Automate provisioning
- Faster provisioning of infrastructure and platforms (PaaS/IaaS) at guaranteed service level

Solution

- vCloud Director

managedhosting.de GmbH

Fast provisioning for demanding customers – With vCloud Director, the IT outsourcing provider managedhosting.de provides its customers with custom virtual infrastructures at the click of a button.

managedhosting.de GmbH is owner-operated and based in Berlin, Germany. For over 150 customers from industry, banks, publishing, government agencies, aviation and aerospace, and the education sector, it serves as a competent and innovative partner for operating complex applications reliably and flexibly as IT outsourcing solutions.

With just five employees, the hosting specialist operates its own data center at locations in Berlin and Dresden and has garnered a best-in-class reputation with its customers since its founding in 2006. Beyond the agility of working with a small, highly qualified team, they also appreciate the reliability of the company's services. "For the customers we support, IT sourcing is first and foremost a matter of trust," said Andreas Wolske, Managing Partner of managedhosting.de. "It really helps that the customers know that we both have the required insurance policies and a data protection officer and are certified with the "VMware vCloud Powered" status. We thus meet all the legal requirements for operating hybrid clouds."

Virtualization from the very start; cloud technologies as early as possible

Using VMware products has been an important part of managedhosting.de since its founding. The company's entire business model is based on an efficiently managed and completely virtualized IT infrastructure.

managedhosting.de's declared strategy since the introduction of ESX 3.0 in 2006 has been to apply virtualization technologies consistently and as extensively as possible and to deploy new VMware products at an early stage for the benefit of its customers.

Thanks to this consistent usage of vSphere, the entire data center now contains only a few dedicated servers; everything else runs on virtual machines whose resource requirements and number can be very high per ESXi host. 32 GB of RAM per VM are typical, and VMDK sizes of 700 GB are not uncommon.

Provisioning resources to customers exactly according to their needs on a Platform as a Service basis has become one of managedhosting.de's key competitive advantages. "Our customers care less and less just how many virtual machines they need, with what equipment, how much storage, and what network bandwidth. Rather, the focus is on defining the service level for the application together with the customer, then we take care of the rest." The "rest" often results from the varied and fast-changing requirements made by the customers. Sometimes the peak loads in special situations need to be handled, and sometimes, for example, the focus is on high availability for years to come.

VMWARE VIRTUAL
INFRASTRUCTURE AT WORK**VMware in use**

- vCloud Director 1.5
- vSphere 5 / ESXi 5
- VMware vSphere Orchestrator
- VMware vShield Zones
- VMware vShield Edge
- VMware vCenter Chargeback

IT infrastructure

- Data center with 99.9% virtual servers
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux as preferred OS

"Using vCloud Director as cloud management software not only reduces the workload for our administrators; it also helps elaborate new business models for our company, which is important for our long-term success as a service provider."

– Andreas Wolske, Managing Partner
of managedhosting.de

The data centers goes virtual – and custom for each customer

With vCloud Director, managedhosting.de found a tool that reduces routine work for the administrators and generates greater value. For example, a managedhosting.de customer operates numerous platforms for e-learning and university administration. In the past, managedhosting.de had to work with the customer to precisely determine the specifications for the required machines, and it took the employees a long time to implement them individually. With vCloud Director, entire applications from a predefined catalog can be provisioned as vApps within the customer's virtual data center at the click of a button.

But customers benefit even more from vCloud Director if they develop software, such as prudsys AG, whose data mining applications are employed in many major German shopping portals and retail chains such as MediamarktSaturn, Conrad, and HSE24. managedhosting.de operates all the production, development, and test servers for prudsys AG. The server landscapes here are relatively homogeneous, with requirements that are easily pre-definable. Creating ever newer virtual machines is part of the daily routine.

These are the requirements under which Catalogue Based Management with vCloud Director works best. Whenever an application (typically consisting of three virtual servers) needs to be set up, an administrator selects the appropriate template from the catalog. Thanks to linked clones, the platform, including networking and storage, is available immediately. The time savings can be up to 95%.

For service providers, server management and the design of virtual infrastructures for their customers will remain a complex and demanding job. Products such as vCloud Director help to automate routine tasks, giving administrators time for more important things and avoiding errors that can never be completely eliminated when performing manual operations.

vCloud Director paves the way for new business models

The fascinating thing about the technology is that it not only reduces the administrators' work and simplifies communication with customers but also directly affects the business processes: "Using management software at such a high level of abstraction always yields new business models or lets us readjust our existing models," said Andreas Wolske. "The longer we work with vCloud Director, the more ideas we get for all the possible applications." vCloud Director provides optimum capabilities for standardizing deployment processes, keeping the virtual machines well under control and making it very easy to meet guidelines such as ITIL that are attracting the focus of more and more customers of outsourcing providers. managedhosting.de can clearly stand out from other market players in this regard. But the wishes of customers and providers also meet in the hybrid cloud. As a VMware-recognized "vCloud Powered Service Provider," managedhosting.de offers its customers both vCloud Director and the corresponding API, which will make it possible to build hybrid clouds and certainly attract many new customers.

Results

- Approx. 30% reduction in total administration time
- For some customers, up to 95% less administration time per VM
- More efficient customer communications
- Standardizable deployment processes
- Process automation of many previously manual operations
- New business models made possible for managedhosting.de

