

THE MORGAN HUNT GROUP - CASE STUDY



SUMMARY

Industry sector: Professional Services (Recruitment)

Business Solution: Storage Area Network

Technology: Huawei



BACKGROUND

The Morgan Hunt Group provides an innovative range of recruitment, consultancy and head-hunting services to leading, global businesses, SMEs and government departments.

The group comprises 200 employees and provides tailored recruitment solutions; including temporary and contract staff, outsourcing, permanent recruitment, project management and executive search from its regional offices in London, Birmingham and Manchester.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Like many businesses, Morgan Hunt is dependent upon the integrity of, and speed of access to its data in order to provide a professional service. A secure, stable and fast IT infrastructure is essential to maintain both service levels and competitive advantage. Given the personal nature of the data held, security and access are of paramount importance.

The incumbent CRM system used a proprietary database that underwent scheduled re-indexing every night. The increase in data volumes over time saw this process become more and more protracted, to the point that some processes were still running at the start of the next working day; impacting on productivity. In extreme cases the database would become corrupt and cause hours of systems downtime.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives for the new system were to reduce the time taken to re-index the database overnight and to improve systems resilience or recoverability in case of database corruption.

In addition, the existing 1Gb network-based iSCSI SAN that hosted the vSphere virtual infrastructure had reached capacity, so there was a requirement for an increase in storage.

SELECTION PROCESS

Keith Waterworth, Senior Infrastructure Engineer for Morgan Hunt explains why they chose Comtec.

“We considered a number of solutions, including adding SANs to our current cluster or a traditional SAN from a number of well-known companies. In order to achieve our IOPs and capacity requirements from our current SAN cluster we would need two additional SANs and this was over budget”.

Keith continues “The Comtec solution was a little different; they recommended a new solution from Huawei. Because this was new-to-market in the UK Comtec and Huawei suggested a proof of concept and a demonstration S5500T to make sure we were happy the SAN could handle our day-to-day requirements”.

THE SOLUTION

Morgan Hunt required a SAN that was both stable and fast enough to deliver against the requirements for both the CRM and the back up system:

- Virtualise the existing physical server on to the vSphere infrastructure
- Hourly SAN snapshotting
- Hourly Veeam back ups
- Nightly, off-site replicated Vembu Storegrid back ups
- Weekly tape back ups

The Comtec solution comprised a Huawei S550T SAN with 10Gb iSCSI. An 11 SAS disk RAID5 volume was used to store the live system and an 11 NL-SAS RAID5 volume for the back ups. Resilience is boosted by a hot space SAS and NL-SAS disk and read performance is increased with a SmartCache with 2 SSD disks.

The vSphere infrastructure was already in place so the iSCSI switches had 10Gb modules installed, followed by the Huawei S5500T configuration. A new virtual server was created and the CRM was migrated across to the new system.

In the time between the SAN being ordered and its delivery on-site new firmware was released with VAAI functionality. A quick call to Huawei resulted in two engineers promptly arriving to perform the upgrade and to demonstrate the new features. "I am continually impressed with Huawei's commitment to great customer service", says Waterworth.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Pre-implementation the CRM system was based on three-tier architecture; the new virtual server is 64bit and the additional memory has allowed the application servers to be removed. Clients can now connect directly to the database server, delivering significant improvements in overall performance for all users.

Business continuity has improved dramatically with back-ups and LUN snapshots taken every hour. With the Instant Recover functionality on the Veeam back up it is possible to boot a complete back up of the live system in minutes and run diagnostics with minimal impact on systems performance.

"The CRM system is much faster and users are reporting performance improvements across the network. There hasn't been a single database issue since the migration".

Keith Waterworth, Senior Infrastructure Engineer, Morgan Hunt

THE FUTURE

Morgan Hunt has one more system to virtualise, which should be completed by the end of Q1 next year. Thoughts will then turn to a VDI project that, whilst not fully scoped as yet, is likely to see the implementation of either additional SmartCache drives or an SSD disk array to the Huawei system to host the desktop images.

ABOUT COMTEC

Comtec is a trusted provider of IT Infrastructure, Datacentre and Communications solutions. We adopt technologies from leading vendors to deliver innovative and cost-effective information and communications technology solutions for businesses of all sizes.

Technology is our domain and we're committed to making it work for you. Whatever your business objectives, our highly experienced consultants and engineers are available to advise you on your short or long-term technology goals. We take the time to understand your business and propose solutions that address your challenges and fit your strategy; we won't just recommend technology for technology's sake.

We're dedicated to building strong relationships with both our clients and our technology partners so whatever your ICT requirement, on-premise, managed or hosted, why not give us a call?

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