

# Case Study

## ■ CASE STUDY

### Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service

*Agency Uses VMware Capacity Planner as a Proof of Concept for Disaster Recovery Implementation Plan*

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) is a small, independent agency that helps settle labor and management disputes by acting as a neutral third party in the discussion. The Agency helps build better relationships through joint problem-solving and constructive responses to inevitable conflict. In turn, this improves the ability of organizations to create value for customers, shareholders and employees alike, and substantially benefits the national economy. In addition, the Agency concentrates its efforts on assisting employers and employees in coping with the demands of a rapidly changing workplace.

### The Challenge



In the course of the past year, FMCS had identified a need to plan and implement a working disaster recovery site because the agency's only recovery system was comprised of offsite backup tapes for restoring systems to the agency's 20 servers.

FMCS wanted to ensure that any software it purchased would be able to support the requirements of the disaster recovery site. The agency could not afford unexpected downtime, lost data, or additional expenditures. "We were looking for a way to get information on our hardware usage that we could then put against the hardware we purchased," says James Donnen, IT Specialist for FMCS. "We needed to make sure the hardware we purchased would handle the workload placed on the servers."

Nortec Strategic Account Executive Deb Wiker had been in contact with FMCS, so when the agency proposed the implementation of a high-availability disaster recovery site, Wiker suggested a virtualization solution as a way to reduce underutilization and management costs, as well as provide solutions to FMCS's concerns about disaster recovery and business continuity.

### The Solution

Wiker explained that virtualization allows several virtual machines to run independently - with their own virtual hardware and operating systems - while the actual physical hardware components are installed on one physical machine or server.

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Because virtual machines are encapsulated into files, administrators are able to move, save or copy entire systems, including fully configured applications, in just seconds, from one physical server to another with no down time.

Wiker then recommended that FMCS install VMware's Capacity Planner and let it run for a month as a proof of concept of the agency's disaster recovery implementation plan. This would allow the agency to see how it was utilizing servers and how it could take advantage of resources it wasn't using. "We wanted to have the software installed, have it run for an amount of time and then get a report back with the results to find out how hard our system uses physical resources," says Donnen.

After the testing phase concludes, Nortec and FMCS would then continue with the virtualization of the entire production environment. "We thought this would be a good measure to make sure the equipment we purchased will handle the job," says Donnen.

Nortec worked with FMCS to set up the VMware Capacity Planner on its servers and storage systems and implemented a schedule for continuing disaster recovery implementation and for ongoing troubleshooting.

## The Benefits

The VMware Capacity Planner proof of concept did just that: "We verified that the hardware we purchased would handle our system and that we didn't have to purchase additional equipment or go a different route," says Donnen. In addition, VMware's Capacity Planner identified what the FMCS system currently uses and how that complements the planned disaster recovery site.

Beyond delivering a seal of approval of FMCS's hardware, the VMware Capacity Planner has confirmed that the agency can now proceed as planned with its disaster recovery implementation. "Our entire organization will benefit because we will be able to implement our DR site the way we were planning," says Donnen. FMCS will also benefit from productivity and cost savings as a virtualized environment reduces the amount of time needed to recover data and is cheaper than replicating the system on physical servers.

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