

## Customer Success Story

# MEESPIERSON

### **Meespierson Guernsey selects Virtustream for major server virtualisation and consolidation overhaul.**

#### **About the Business:**

At the time of the project Meespierson Guernsey was part of the Meespierson Banking and Insurance group; one of the worlds leading banking and insurance companies providing services to personal, business and institutional customers. The Group delivers its clients an extensive range of financial products and services including merchant, commercial and private banking; insurance and investments. Within their Channel Island arm, MessPierson Guernsey offers offshore clients complete wealth management, banking, fund, investment management, taxation and trust & corporate services. As part of the realignment of the banking sector, Meespierson Guernsey is now owned by the Dutch government, providing further surety for clients.

The Channel Islands operation is run out of the Meespierson Guernsey office in St Peter Port. There, Mark Duddy, IT Manager, Meespierson Guernsey, looks after the IT infrastructure team providing enhanced and reliable services to over 275 staff. The supporting IT team consists of 6 experienced members.

#### **About the Infrastructure:**

Meespierson Guernsey has over 80 servers that support the core systems for the organisation. Recognising that significant further hardware investment was becoming necessary to stop servers falling out of warranty, it seemed a natural progression to consider virtualisation as a means of rationalising further server purchases and consolidating the growing environment. Initially the IT team started with a piecemeal approach within the confines of the datacentre test environment and although testing worked well, Mark recognised that they could benefit from expert help to provide a holistic view of the total enterprise. Meespierson Guernsey needed to be sure that any virtualisation could successfully accommodate growth whilst consolidating what was already in place, without compromising system reliability.

The team's objectives were clear. Meespierson Guernsey wished to be able to easily provision new systems; provide demonstrable growth for the future; virtualize the servers for easier management, show hardware savings and cost savings; and replace legacy hardware efficiently and cost effectively under the confines of financial services application retention and decommissioning rules that span ten years.

In terms of the Mees Pierson Guernsey environment, the 80+ servers run on Windows or Linux; holding the businesses critical management applications such as Active Directory; Exchange E-mail; file and print services and SQL Databases. The core banking system, running on IBM pSeries AIX servers, was deemed an unsuitable candidate for virtualisation due to the size, complexity, significant CPU usage and memory requirements, however all the ancillary systems were targeted for virtualization.

Mark's internal support team was familiar with the challenges of addressing server sprawl and some of the team had used server virtualisation in the past, so much of the foundation work in the datacentre test environment could be decided in-house. What they lacked was the expertise to implement server consolidation across the enterprise. So in mid 2007, Mark and the team started the procurement process for VMware test kit through Virtustream.

#### **Virtustreams response:**

Virtustream assigned their key VMware advisory consultants to the challenge. Taking a high level approach, Virtustream conducted initial studies of what was already in place at Meespierson Guernsey, conducting detailed benchmarks of what was needed across a month period, analysing and cataloguing peaks and troughs of performance in order to design an optimum virtualised scenario. The benchmarks detailed the memory and processing capabilities of each server; testing and analysing to extreme for resilience and failover. At the end of the months testing, Virtustreams consultants' delivered a full roadmap of what optimum server virtualisation could look like at Meespierson Guernsey recommending VMware's ESX 3.0 server virtualisation platform.

Mark noted: “It was important that we did the extensive groundwork hand in hand with Virtustream. It not only allowed the organisation to go into the project with realistic expectations of what server virtualisation could bring but it also highlighted areas such as virtual performance monitoring that we could drill down into.”

So, in mid 2007 Meespierson Guernsey officially appointed Virtustream to run the server virtualisation project.

**Technical Solution:**

The project installation commenced early in 2008 with over 80 physical servers being migrated onto 6 VMware ESX 3.0 server hosts running on IBM hardware. For Disaster Recovery the VMware hosts were split with a resilient data connection across the organisations two data centres.

Testing was rigorous; with the team repeatedly soak testing and straining the servers to the maximum in a test environment. Only when the team and Virtustream were satisfied with the results, did installation commence.

Installation and migration was relatively seamless. Using the internal existing pool of knowledge of VMware combined with intensive knowledge transfer from Virtustreams, much of the installation was able to be conducted internally. A consultant from Virtustream worked alongside throughout the duration and became a key member of the migration team providing valuable advice on server, storage and networking implications.

**Main Benefits:**

Perhaps one of the biggest advantages is that the IT Team can now adhere easily to Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Procedures. BCP regulations mean that Meespierson Guernsey need to actively demonstrate that all systems are on-line, tested, fully available, secure and resilient through to the Disaster Recovery site. This annual testing procedure used to be onerous and resource intensive, involving movement of all live production and test data followed by manual reporting of results. Using the simplified management provided through virtualisation, failover successfully occurs and is fully secured, resilient and contained within less than an hour.

Resource savings are also paramount to Meespierson Guernsey. Not only has the bottom line seen considerable savings in new hardware purchases, but as a committed and responsible environmental organisation, an important corporate saving has involved the bank significantly lowering its carbon footprint and power consumption.

In terms of resource management, the IT Department are now able to manage servers centrally rather than physically powering down and rebooting. Further cost and resource savings are achieved when provisioning new servers, which is now far easier. New servers are rolled out quickly with migration of data also being simplified.

Mark notes “Summarising the benefits of the server virtualisation project is hard to quantify simply because they are so extensive and wide ranging. Virtustream were, and remain, instrumental in the success of the project – from the initial benchmark and design process right through to the thorough skills and knowledge transfer to our in-house team.”

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