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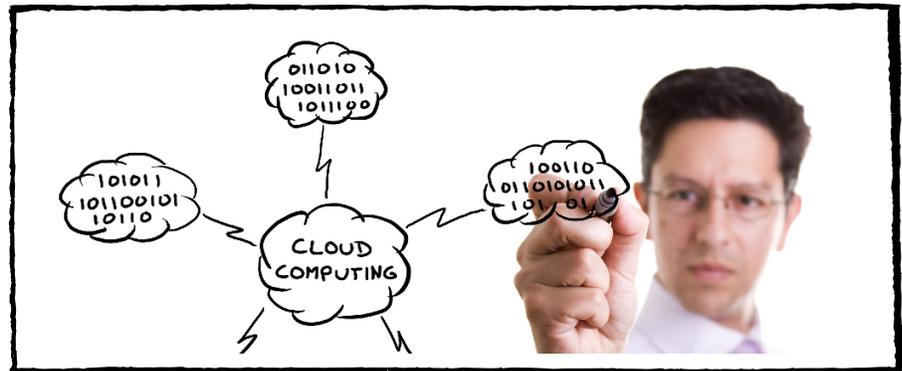
# Cirrity Fortifies Operations and Grows Business on FlexPod with Clustered Data ONTAP and VMware vCloud Suite

**CIRRITY**



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

**Industry**
Cloud services

**The Challenge**
Accommodate new customers and more data, keep IT costs in check, and provide high performance and availability

**The Solution**
Capturing more market share using FlexPod® with clustered Data ONTAP® and VMware® vCloud® Suite

**Benefits**
• Deliver same-day cloud services supported by a powerful, secure, and highly scalable IT infrastructure
• Offer a 100% uptime SLA backed by a reliable infrastructure
• Leverage integrated technology, facilitated by unified vendor collaboration, for simplified management and optimized, cost-efficient operations

## Customer Profile

Known for its compliant and secure cloud hosting services, Cirrity provides customers—especially those in heavily regulated industries—with all the benefits of cloud computing without the time, risk, and expense of deploying and maintaining an in-house solution.

Originally part of BlueWave Computing, one of the largest managed service providers (MSPs) in the United States, Cirrity now operates as an independent, channel-focused cloud services provider. Catering to consultants, value-added resellers (VARs), MSPs, and others, Cirrity offers state-of-the-art infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) solutions backed by extensive expertise.

As a newly autonomous company in the highly competitive cloud services market, Cirrity's mission remains the same as it was when it was part of BlueWave: to build long-term, mutually beneficial relationships through trusted services and unsurpassed support.

Continued success depends on Cirrity's ability to attract new customers and retain existing ones through innovative cloud services designed to alleviate IT

challenges such as managing data growth, business continuity, security, and compliance. Controlling costs, improving business agility, and liberating IT staff from time-consuming administration are additional facets of Cirrity's customer-centric cloud services model. With Cirrity on the job, customers can devote more time and capital toward broadening the reach and success of their own businesses as opportunities arise.

## The Challenge

To support a growing customer base, Cirrity requires an IT infrastructure that can scale simply and seamlessly. It also needs a centralized, easily managed, and automated IT infrastructure, so that even during rapid growth as much time as possible can be devoted to activities that will help build the business. The ability to optimize server and storage efficiencies is also key to providing a competitively priced, quality product.

To attract vertical industries such as healthcare and finance, security and compliance must be integral to the infrastructure rather than addressed as afterthoughts. Above all, as a cloud services provider introducing a new

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President and CTO, Cirrity

brand and seeking a wider audience, Cirrity's infrastructure must be rock solid, delivering nonstop availability and high performance without fail.

First deployed when Cirrity was still part of BlueWave, VMware on FlexPod by NetApp and Cisco has successfully supported the company's secure, PCI-certified cloud infrastructure for the last 12 months. "The joint technology and tight vendor collaboration between NetApp, Cisco, and VMware make the solution incredibly appealing—especially when our business depends on contin-uously running operations," says Dan Timko, president and CTO of Cirrity.

### The Solution
**Unified Scale-Up and Scale-Out Infrastructure**
Cirrity's FlexPod solution resides in the company's primary data center and includes multiple NetApp® FAS3240 and FAS3220 storage systems as well as Cisco Unified Computing System™ (Cisco UCS®) B230 M2 blade servers, enterprise-class Cisco Nexus® 5548 Series Switches, and Cisco UCS 6248UP 48-port fabric interconnects.

Both the FAS3240 and FAS3220 systems are configured with NetApp clustered Data ONTAP 8.1.1 software. Clustered Data ONTAP brings high availability; centralized management; nondisruptive

operations; and scale-up, scale-out capabilities to new levels within Cirrity's 100% virtualized environment.

"Business continuity is critical to our reputation," says Timko. "The ability to operate in cluster mode means we can move data from storage system to stor-age system for maintenance or other activities without affecting users. There is also significant advantage in seamlessly adding NetApp systems as needed with-out having to buy big metal up front."

Providing a fast, cost-efficient way to grow the server side of the business, Cisco UCS blade servers can be added incrementally to high-density Cisco UCS blade server chassis as needs require, while Cisco UCS 6248UP 48-port fabric interconnects remove the need for mul-tiple switches and fabrics for each blade. In addition, enterprise-class Cisco Nexus 5548 Series Switches deliver 10GB throughput for optimum connectivity.

To boost performance for variable workloads, Cirrity uses NetApp Flash Cache™ modules on the storage con-trollers. "As a service provider you don't necessarily know the peaks and valleys of a new customer's workloads," explains Timko. "With Flash Cache in our environment, we can easily handle those peak times." In addition, NetApp FAS2240 systems in the company's primary and secondary data centers

leverage SAS as well as lower cost SATA drives, which provide a lower tier disk option to customers.

**Seamless Integration with VMware**
A key benefit that FlexPod brings to Cirrity's IT infrastructure is seamless integration with its virtualized environ-ment. Installed on top of Cisco® blade servers, VMware vSphere® 5.1 hypervisors partition VMware ESX® virtual machines, which are then supported by the NetApp shared storage infrastructure. This unified, space- and power-efficient platform supports all of the company's server and database applications for both the business and its clients. Virtualized applications include everything from Microsoft® Exchange and SQL Server®, to HIPAA and PCI-compliant solutions, to disaster recovery and even proprietary client software.

Equally vital to the business is Cirrity's use of VMware vCloud Suite 5.1 solu-tions, which include vSphere and vCloud Director software. vCloud Suite, supported by VMware vShield™ 5.0.1 and FlexPod, enables Cirrity to stand up and holistically manage highly secure, multi-tenant instances for customers the same day the request is made.

**Simplified Management**
Driven by ongoing vendor collaboration, FlexPod is forging greater management

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**Andrew Albrecht**
Chief Operating Officer, Cirrity

tool integration and automation across the infrastructure. With vCloud Director acting as the orchestration tool, NetApp OnCommand® Unified Manager, Cisco UCS Manager, and NetApp Virtual Storage Console for VMware vSphere are leveraged within Cirrity's FlexPod environment as a cohesive whole to streamline the management and optimization of servers, storage, networks, and the virtual environment. In particular, NetApp Virtual Storage Console checks and configures settings for ESX hosts according to VMware and NetApp best practices and facilitates the ability to make use of NetApp backup, restore, and disaster recovery capabilities.

"It is impressive to see how closely these vendors work together on both support and product line development," says Timko. "The results of this collaboration are helping us maximize the value of our engineers' time—which leaves more time for improving our services and expanding our business."

### Business Benefits
### The Right Infrastructure: A Springboard to Success

During Cirrity's first year, the company doubled its primary NetApp storage, which is now over 200TB. Growth is expected to be at least as high or higher in the future. VMware vSphere on FlexPod, powered by the massive storage scalability afforded by clustered Data ONTAP, positions Cirrity to nondisruptively and cohesively grow its environment up and out. "The customers who are already on the platform continue to grow, and with the onboarding of new customers, we're seeing an exciting growth line emerging," says Timko. "With FlexPod and clustered Data ONTAP, we're prepared."

Because the VMware on FlexPod infrastructure is tightly integrated, highly automated, and centrally managed using only a few key tools, fewer specialized resources and less time are needed to keep everything running optimally. "Having a reliable infrastructure that doesn't take up a lot of our time to manage saves us money and gets us plenty of goodwill from customers," explains Timko. "The ability to do what we do with fewer people, and still be able to offer a 100% uptime SLA on the infrastructure, is pure business benefit because we can spend less time on administration and more on those things that will help us gain greater market share, such as new product development and sales."

### Key Competitive Differentiators

Prepared to support customers large and small, Cirrity's on-demand FlexPod infrastructure with clustered Data ONTAP enables the company to deliver industry-leading cloud services to its channel partners in an extremely competitive time frame. "No customer wants to sign up for cloud services and learn it will take 30 days to get online," says Timko. "VMware on FlexPod with clustered Data ONTAP enables us to deliver services the same day that the request is made."

The ability to offer its customers a compliant, highly secure environment on top of an enterprise-grade infrastructure is another competitive differentiator for Cirrity. "We're not content to rely on a once a year audit to make sure our servers are in a compliant state," says Timko. "Rather, we run reports using VMware vCenter™ Configuration Manager on a weekly basis and can show independent third-party auditors that our servers consistently meet regulations."

For those channel customers seeking a white-label or colabel brand, Cirrity is able to offer that too, backed by a prevalidated VMware on FlexPod platform that is ready to go. "With VMware on FlexPod we are able to give our customers reliable infrastructure and a speed-to-market edge," says Andrew Albrecht, chief operating officer at Cirrity. "Customers can immediately start generating revenue under their own label without incurring heavy capital expenses or subjecting their business to deployment risks."

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**Dan Timko**
President and CTO, Cirrity

### Building a Brand as a Business Enabler

As an emerging cloud services provider with potential for exponential growth, Cirrity is leveraging its extensive cloud services expertise and VMware on FlexPod with clustered Data ONTAP to help it build its brand as a business enabler.

"One of our greatest competitive strengths is our ability to present solutions to MSPs, VMware consultants, and other solution providers that take risk and high expense out of the equation," says Albrecht. "VMware on FlexPod with clustered Data ONTAP supports our ability to deliver value to our customers on multiple levels."

## SOLUTION COMPONENTS

### FlexPod Components
NetApp FAS3240 and FAS3220 storage systems with:

- NetApp clustered Data ONTAP 8.1.1
- NetApp Flash Cache modules
- NetApp OnCommand Unified Manager 5.0
- NetApp Virtual Storage Console

Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS) B230 M2 blade servers

Cisco UCS 6248UP 48-port fabric interconnects

Cisco UCS Manager 2.1

Cisco Nexus 5548 Series Switches

### Virtualization Components
VMware vCloud Suite 5.1, which includes vSphere and vCloud Director

VMware vShield 5.0.1

### Additional Components
FAS2240 storage systems

### Partners
Cisco
*www.cisco.com*

VMware
*www.vmware.com*

### Customer
Cirrity
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