BluePearl grows faster and leaner with Cisco HyperFlex hyperconverged data center

BluePearl Veterinary Partners  |  Size: 6500 employees  |  Industry: Veterinary medicine  |  Location: Tampa, Florida

BluePearl Veterinary Partners is a national network of specialty and emergency pet hospitals. A Mars Petcare company, it partners with family veterinarians who provide primary patient care, ensuring an unbroken continuum of quality medicine for pets. Committed to kindness and compassionate care, BluePearl has had many high-profile successes, including saving the life of a U.S. Air Force canine trained to detect explosives.

For more information, visit bluepearlvet.com.

**Challenges**
- Scale infrastructure as business grows
- Eliminate silos of technology
- Reduce strain on IT resources

**Solutions**
- All-in-one Cisco HyperFlex™ hyperconverged platform unifies computing, storage, and networking
- Single-pane-of-glass management simplifies administration
- All flash drives deliver peak performance

**Results**
- Enables business to scale efficiently and cost-effectively
- Reduces infrastructure deployment time by 80%
- Supports growth while keeping IT headcount flat

For more information on the Cisco HyperFlex hyperconverged infrastructure platform, visit cisco.com/go/hyperflex
Challenge: Keeping pace with rapid growth

BluePearl’s business is on a fast growth curve, steadily expanding at a rate of 50 to 60 percent per year. The company currently maintains 72 locations in 24 states and must provide excellent performance and healthcare-grade systems availability to all animal care facilities.

Early on in its growth strategy, BluePearl faced a critical choice: either hire more IT staff or make its environment easier to manage. After trying a shared infrastructure platform from another vendor and finding it too difficult to scale, the company became an early adopter of Cisco HyperFlex hyperconverged infrastructure.

“We wanted an all-in-one solution that would be data center ready without spawning new islands of infrastructure,” says Derek DePasture, BluePearl IT Manager, Networking and Security. “Our goal was to eliminate silos, not create them. With Cisco HyperFlex we invest once and scale up as high as we need.”

“Running on Cisco HyperFlex with all flash drives, it’s crazy fast, creating a ripple effect of efficiency across our entire organization.”

Derek DePasture
IT Manager, Networking and Security, BluePearl
Productivity gains from day one

Not only was Cisco HyperFlex the perfect fit for the company, it quickly became the gold standard for technology. Starting with a small three-node Cisco HyperFlex cluster, BluePearl continued to grow its virtual environment to the point where it now has 35 nodes in its core hyperconverged data center representing a mix of hybrid and all flash clusters.

Productivity gains were evident the day the first Cisco HyperFlex system was deployed. DePasture and his team were able to unbox and configure it in hours, a time savings of 80 percent compared to the previous shared infrastructure, which required a week of administration before it was ready for production.

Users logging into the company’s Cornerstone Practice Management system also experienced immediate time savings, noticing a significant decrease in lag time between screens from eight seconds to less than one.

“Just about everything in our business depends on Cornerstone, from patient records to billing,” says DePasture. “Running on Cisco HyperFlex with all flash drives, it’s crazy fast, creating a ripple effect of efficiency across our entire organization.”

IT pivots with business

In addition to its core hyperconverged data center, BluePearl is running two separate Cisco HyperFlex environments to support its newly acquired teleradiology business. DePasture’s team is currently in the process of migrating a handful of remaining hospitals onto the hyperconverged infrastructure and, looking to the future, has provisioned for 200 percent growth over the next 18 months.

“A lot of the issues that we’ve faced in the past when growing environments have gone away,” says DePasture. “Agility has been key. It has allowed us to maneuver and pivot as the organization pivots, without the need to bring in outside contractors or postpone other projects.”

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The leanest team in IT

Behind the scenes, the Cisco HyperFlex infrastructure is supporting the roll-out of new applications, including a charge capture system that ensures technicians charge clients the right amount, and a records management system that enhances communication between BluePearl hospitals and referring veterinarians.

There are more employees accessing more systems, yielding a greater load on the company’s underlying database, and meanwhile performance is stronger. At the same time, the expanding hyperconverged infrastructure is still managed by DePasture and one staff member—a feat that’s earned them recognition from the top.

“It has been commented on at the highest levels of our organization that we are one of the leanest teams in IT and yet we’re able to get things done as efficiently as the larger teams,” remarks DePasture. “We haven’t had to increase our numbers to support growth at the same rate as other departments.”

Looking ahead

As BluePearl continues to grow, having a centralized data center standardized on Cisco HyperFlex is a big advantage. Newly acquired hospitals are easily migrated onto the virtual environment according to the timeline that best suits them—a process DePasture says can take as little as an hour.

With single-pane-of-glass management, the Cisco HyperFlex platform enables him to keep his headcount flat and, instead of being consumed by infrastructure management, his staff can focus on providing excellent user experiences. Moving forward, he expects to simplify the management process even further by acquiring Cisco Intersight™, an intuitive, cloud-based systems management platform.

“With our hyperconverged infrastructure, we don’t have to worry because everything is designed to work together and there are multiple redundancies in place,” says DePasture. “As we grow, we can continue to onboard new sites faster and find new ways to help our veterinarians deliver the best possible care.”

Products

- Cisco HyperFlex