



OVERVIEW

Human resources and recruitment firm Chandler MacLeod Group called on Diaxon's server and storage virtualisation expertise to help it implement a DR capability based on virtualisation. A year later, the technology has not only enabled DR for the organisation, but has also cut power consumption, enabled its 7TB storage area network, revitalised crucial legacy applications, and improved application delivery to its 75 branch offices.

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John Walker
IT Programme Manager
Chandler MacLeod Group

Customer Success: Diaxon Expertise Fills a Key Role at Chandler MacLeod Group

The Business Challenge

Thanks to years of expansion, Chandler MacLeod Group found itself facing the need to consolidate its servers yet also provide DR in a separate facility— and recognised that server virtualisation was an excellent first step.

This epiphany came hot on the heels of a significant change to the data centre architecture, which relies on Citrix Systems thin-client servers to deliver applications to the company's branch offices. Managing key applications centrally had kept management costs down, but it also increased Chandler MacLeod Group's need to ensure its offices never lost access to the application servers they needed.

Clear on the challenge that lay in front of it, the company began laying plans to use server virtualisation to shore up its data centre, boost uptime by improving its disaster recovery configuration, and use storage virtualisation techniques to support the construction of a 7TB storage area network (SAN) that would lie at the heart of its newly centralised IT operations.

The Solution

In searching for an implementation partner, Chandler MacLeod Group looked right past the traditional Big Five consulting companies. Instead, it spoke with a number of smaller, more specialised service providers that it knew could focus their attention more directly on its needs. Comparing the many proposals it received, the company quickly realised that Diaxon had the right mix of technical capabilities and personalised attention to help it obtain the outcomes it needed.

“Diaxon offered a strong understanding of data centre infrastructures, server virtualisation and storage technologies,” said John Walker, IT Programme Manager with Chandler MacLeod Group. “We didn't want to partner with a massive consultancy, and we have found Diaxon to be far more flexible and accommodating in terms of providing services.”

As the project began, Diaxon conducted a detailed evaluation of Chandler MacLeod Group's existing IT environment, identifying servers that were ready for consolidation and developing a roadmap for executing the project. Diaxon also audited the company's disaster recovery (DR) capabilities, highlighting areas for improvement and wrapping a DR strategy into its overall project plan.



“The success of this consolidation has not only improved Chandler MacLeod Group’s existing infrastructure, but has allowed the company to reduce its capital expenditure on servers while continuing to innovate.”

*John Walker
IT Programme Manager
Chandler MacLeod Group*

The entire solution was built around VMWare ESX Server virtualisation technology, which was initially used to obtain the server consolidation benefits identified during the audit. Dozens of Chandler MacLeod Group applications, most running on underutilised servers, were converted to VMware virtual machines (VMs) using PlateSpin PowerConvert. These VMs were installed onto a cluster of just four HP DL580 servers, which now run more than 50 VMs simultaneously.

Nearly every server was converted to a VM, with the exception of those involved in the Citrix thin-client environment used to deliver applications to Chandler MacLeod Group’s extensive network of branch offices. Those VMs were moved onto Chandler MacLeod Group’s SAN, which Diaxion constructed using DataCore SANMelody storage virtualisation software, which unified a broad range of new and existing storage to provide 7TB of redundant disk space.

Having freed the server applications from their server hardware, Diaxion then implemented a new DR environment that replicates all of the VMs to a secondary site. This level of redundancy would have been impossible given the number of servers Chandler MacLeod Group used in the past, but became feasible because VMs are self-contained in large files that are easily moved and copied within the virtualised storage environment. PlateSpin PowerRecon is used for ongoing performance reporting and monitoring.

The Business Benefits

Server virtualisation has enabled a complete renewal of Chandler MacLeod Group’s IT infrastructure.

Virtualising the company’s crucial but aging legacy applications allowed it to keep those applications running smoothly as virtual machines on modern servers, but get rid of aging physical servers that were no longer supported by their manufacturers. This allowed it to meet legal requirements for document retention, without being forced to maintain outdated technology.

Physical floor space decreased by nearly 20% after more than 25 physical servers were made redundant by shifting their VMs onto other systems. This led to a significant reduction in power consumption, with an estimated 330,000 kWh of electricity saved annually – the equivalent of 201,360kg of carbon emissions, or taking 75 cars off the road permanently.

Chandler MacLeod Group’s virtualised storage environment has provided a redundant design that has provided the high-availability disaster recovery capabilities the company was looking for. This infrastructure has improved the company’s IT governance, and allows it to add new applications in minutes simply by configuring additional VMs.

“We used to have a perennial problem with data centre space and logistics, but now we can think in terms of correct architectural implementations without being burdened by the thought that we need to buy more machines. Working with Diaxion to implement this technology has given us a degree of freedom and put us in a far better position than we were in before.”



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The Future

Completed after nine months, the virtualisation project has laid the groundwork for a broad range of enhancements in the future Chandler MacLeod Group can now expand its business as it sees fit, without having to worry that supporting IT applications will put an untenable burden on its data centre. Thanks to its new disaster recovery environment, this expansion can be planned and executed with the confidence that the company’s underlying infrastructure is sound and reliable.

This confidence has led the company to engage Diaxion for further work on an ongoing basis – providing virtualisation support, trouble-shooting application problems, conducting regular data centre and application strategy reviews, and more. Working together, Diaxion and Chandler MacLeod Group will ensure that Australasia’s premier human resources consultancy grows as quickly as its people – and not as slowly as its architecture.

Chandler MacLeod Group – Company Profile

With 900 permanent staff managing 14,000 on-hired employees through 75 offices across Australasia, Chandler MacLeod Group is one of the region’s largest human resources consultancy and recruitment firms. Founded in 1959, it has expanded to include 13 specialised staffing operations that provide a full range of HR solutions serving engineering, blue-collar, executive search, supply chain and logistics, healthcare and other needs.

Technology partners



Storage Virtualisation



Virtual Infrastructure Platform



Capacity Planning
Disaster Recovery and Server
Migration (P2V, P2P, V2P)



The best IT solutions are not about providing a single solution to a single problem but rather about how the solution complements the entire organisation’s IT strategy and how it might then be optimised across the organisation.

IT Strategy and Optimisation is a holistic approach to addressing and developing overall IT strategies to address individual business goals and to then integrate them with an IT solution that is optimised to achieve those goals.