

# WILLIAMS & FUDGE

## Financial firm transforms IT to enable dramatic business growth



### ESSENTIALS

#### Industry

Financial services

#### Company Size

360 employees

#### Business Challenges

- Limited scalability to handle growth
- Growing IT administrative burden

#### Solutions

- EMC VNX unified storage
- EMC Total Efficiency Pack
- VMware View, VMware vSphere, VMware vCenter Site Recovery Manager, VMware vStorage API for Array Integration (VAAI)
- Microsoft SharePoint, Microsoft SQL Server, VMware Zimbra, custom Linux applications

### OVERVIEW

Williams & Fudge is an accounts receivable management firm serving 1,200 colleges, universities, and financial institutions.

### BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Williams & Fudge was facing increased demand from higher-education and financial institutions seeking assistance with collecting receivables on college loans and other debt.

The company's previous physical IT infrastructure lacked sufficient scalability to handle the growth. The infrastructure also required significant management resources, which was a drain on the company's lean IT staff.

### SOLUTIONS

Williams & Fudge evaluated EMC and other competitive solutions but chose EMC® VNX unified storage and VMware technologies to transform its business and accelerate its journey to the cloud.

Phillip Reynolds, Williams & Fudge's Data Center Director, says, "We took a hard look at other unified storage vendors but determined they weren't going to deliver the performance our intensive Microsoft SharePoint and Microsoft SQL Server workloads needed. Plus, they didn't have the streamlined integration with VMware that makes managing this environment so easy."

VNX supports the company's entire virtualized environment, including SharePoint, SQL Server, VMware® Zimbra email and calendaring, and custom-built Linux applications, such as CR Software's Platinum.

Williams & Fudge virtualized 100 percent of its server infrastructure with VMware vSphere™. The company also rolled out a virtual end user computing infrastructure to 260 users with plans to reach 360 virtualized desktops by year-end.

Williams & Fudge also relies on VMware vCenter™ Operations Management Suite and VMware vStorage API for Array Integration (VAAI) to further streamline management of its virtualized infrastructure.

In addition, the company selected EMC because it offers a true FLASH 1<sup>st</sup> strategy for increased performance and efficiency. FLASH 1<sup>st</sup> incorporates the EMC FAST™ Suite (including FAST VP and FAST Cache), along with Flash and high-capacity drives. This FLASH 1<sup>st</sup> strategy ensures that hot or active data is automatically stored on Flash for optimal performance, while less active data is tiered to high capacity drives for the lowest overall cost per gigabyte.

For disaster recovery, Williams & Fudge uses EMC RecoverPoint™ as part of the EMC Remote Protection Suite, and VMware vCenter Site Recovery Manager (SRM) to



CUSTOMER PROFILE

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## Results

- Doubled employee count without expanding IT staff
- Decreased desktop boot times from five to ten minutes to 30 seconds
- Enabled instantaneous response times for SharePoint users
- Reduced IT support cost per user
- Enabled RPO of 15 minutes or less and RTO of 15 minutes
- Achieved 100 percent availability of business-critical applications

replicate its virtualized infrastructure across two data centers located 100 miles apart.

## MEETING BUSINESS DEMAND WITH AGILITY

Business agility is a strategic requirement at Williams & Fudge, which added 210 employees to support growing demand for its services.

"In only five years, we grew from 150 to 360 employees, while our lean IT staff of three employees stayed the same—something that wouldn't have been possible without EMC and VMware," Reynolds recalls, "We're comfortable that EMC and VMware will provide our data center the agility needed to meet the business and projections for the company to double or triple in size over the next three years."

With EMC and VMware solutions, the IT organization can add applications, virtual desktops, and storage quickly and easily.

Reynolds explains, "We've transformed into a proactive business, ready for whatever comes next. If a new client project requires 50 additional staff, we can spin up 50 desktops in no time. By leveraging technology as a business enabler, we can rapidly respond to dynamic needs."

**"With VNX and the FAST Suite backing our virtual end user computing infrastructure, we're getting great performance—even when boot storms occur. It's amazing—just a little Flash goes a long way."**

Phillip Reynolds  
Data Center Director at Williams & Fudge

## SPEEDING VIRTUAL DESKTOPS AND MICROSOFT SHAREPOINT

As hundreds of employees log in to their virtual desktops each day, Williams & Fudge requires top performance and the ability to adjust as demand fluctuates.

Flash drives represent only four percent of Williams and Fudge's total capacity, while high-capacity nearline SAS and SAS drives comprise the remainder. Even so, FLASH virtual desktop response has improved greatly because of FLASH 1<sup>st</sup>.

"With VNX and FAST Cache backing our virtual end user computing infrastructure, we're getting great performance—even when boot storms occur," says Reynolds. "It's amazing—just a little Flash goes a long way."

He adds, "Our call center agents boot up their virtual desktops in only 30 seconds compared to five to ten minutes for PCs. And because they operate on commission, getting them to work faster helps generate more revenue."

In addition, VNX and the FAST Suite have helped deliver improved response times for the company's SharePoint collaboration and document sharing environment.

Reynolds says, "SharePoint is the hub of our business operations that connects thousands of documents with our employees for filling out forms, submitting applications, and managing accounts. With VNX and FLASH 1<sup>st</sup>, we're delivering instantaneous responses times to SharePoint indexing and search functions. SharePoint performance isn't even affected when the infrastructure loads 250 virtual desktops in seconds."

## REDUCING COSTS AS INFRASTRUCTURE GROWS

Even as the company has grown, IT has documented time and cost savings due to

implementing VNX and VMware solutions.

"Due to our private cloud, we've shrunk our data center footprint from 12 physical servers to three hosts and more than 50 VMs, reducing our hardware costs," reflects Reynolds. "The number of help desk calls and overall IT support cost per user also has dropped substantially."

IT does not need to directly maintain hundreds of desktops and servers and instead works with a few golden images.

Reynolds explains, "The excellent integration of EMC and VMware has offloaded many tasks from our virtual host servers onto the storage array. VAAI is a prime example of that integration, especially when we're provisioning desktops or migrating servers to different hosts. The combined infrastructure enabled us to avoid expanding our staff and increasing the cost to our business."

## **ENABLING 100 PERCENT AVAILABILITY**

Another advantage of the private cloud is that Williams & Fudge has improved availability of its critical business applications with advanced disaster recovery.

"With RecoverPoint and SRM, we migrate all of our virtual machines across 200 miles in about 30 minutes," says Reynolds. "We can move stuff quickly through a small pipe because RecoverPoint's bandwidth reduction is phenomenal. And because everything is integrated and pre-scripted, I just press the button and it's done."

The company credits its EMC solution with enabling a recovery point objective (RPO) of 15 minutes or less and recovery time objective (RTO) of 15 minutes.

He adds, "With our private cloud running on EMC and VMware, we're getting 100 percent availability of our resources."

## **TRANSFORMING THE BUSINESS**

With EMC and VMware, Williams & Fudge has greatly improved business agility and application availability while lowering operational costs.

Reynolds says, "EMC and VMware View have helped transform our business. Users are more productive and our business is more agile. We're confident that VMware and EMC will enable our data center to lead the way and grow with our business."

## **CONTACT US**

To learn more about how EMC products, services, and solutions can help solve your business and IT challenges, [contact](#) your local representative or authorized reseller—or visit us at [www.EMC.com](http://www.EMC.com).

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