

Insurer Cuts Costs While Improving Service

Customer Case Study



Pojišťovna České spořitelny, part of the Vienna Insurance Group, improves efficiency of server management by nearly 100 percent

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Pojišťovna České spořitelny, part of the Vienna Insurance Group

Industry: Insurance

Location: Czech Republic

Number of Employees: 260 employees with 1700 remote named users in partner organizations

Challenge

- To build a platform for organizational agility, growth, and cost reduction

Solution

- Cisco Unified Data Center architecture, based on Cisco Unified Computing System with Intel® Xeon® processors and Nexus switching

Results

- Provisioning time reduced by 60 percent and cabling requirements cut by 30 percent
- Power consumption lowered by 40 percent
- Costs for hardware and licensing cut by 25 and 30 percent respectively

Challenge

Pojišťovna České spořitelny (PCS) is an insurance company and one of the 24 subsidiaries of the international Vienna Insurance Group, one of the largest players within Central and Eastern Europe. The company has around 1.8 million customers and is keen to grow rapidly and become an insurance market leader in the Czech Republic.

However, historically its data center operations had been poorly equipped to deal with business growth, given its low levels of consolidation and virtualization. PCS has a main data center in Pardubice and a smaller one about 100 kilometers away in Prague, which together serve the needs of around 260 office-based staff and 1700 remote named workers in partner organizations.

The centers contained 70 servers, which in turn supported just over 120 virtual machines. With the business set to grow, however, the company's small IT team realized that it would have to move to a more efficient infrastructure capable of offering higher availability, improved IT agility, and lower running costs.

Dušan Drdla, member of the senior management team at PCS, says: "We needed better hardware and software with high-availability features for IT back office functions to cope with growing data levels and to build better business information systems."

Solution

Having considered various offerings, PCS selected Cisco because it has the most advanced server and network technology.

When PCS first started talking to Cisco about upgrading its data center technology, the main focus of attention was simply to reduce the management effort involved in administration. PCS believed that the best option was the Cisco Nexus® 1000V virtual switching platform.



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Dušan Drdla
Head of IT Section
Pojišťovna České spořitelny, a.s., Vienna
Insurance Group

Early on, however, it became apparent that PCS could obtain extra benefits, including improved application performance and greater server consolidation and capacity, by taking a holistic data center approach. That strategy would be based on Cisco® Unified Data Center architecture, which is built on the Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®).

PCS was also conscious that UCS would integrate smoothly with the Cisco MDS 9500 Series Multilayer Directors it was using to connect the two sites, via a 10Gbps Fiber Channel connection. The company chose a mixture of UCS B230 M2 Series Blade Servers with extended memory and UCS C260 Series Rack Servers, becoming the first company in the Czech Republic to combine both models under a single unified management system using Cisco UCS Manager.

PCS was concerned about migrating to the new infrastructure because it was only possible to carry out the work outside business hours at weekends. “During the migration phase we prepared all server configurations in advance using the UCS service profile tool,” says Mr Drdla. “This helped to shorten the changeover from five to two days.”

Moving to Cisco UCS servers powered by the Intel® Xeon® processor E7 family has helped PCS achieve an optimal core-per-processor density for virtualization while maximizing reliability, availability, and serviceability. The company had made a strategic decision to standardize on Intel Xeon processors 10 years ago, because of their features, functionality, and performance in virtualization.

PCS has deployed 40 B230 and 13 C260 dual-socket servers, with 30 of the blades and eight of the racks located in Pardubice and the remainder in Prague. At the same time, the company has migrated to new EMC and Hitachi storage arrays with Qualstar tape systems. The hardware uses the VMware vSphere ESX hypervisor to support more than 120 virtual machines, plus VMware View for desktop virtualization.

Core applications running on Cisco UCS include SAP ERP Central Component 6.0, core insurance systems, and Microsoft SQL server databases.

Results

PCS has reduced its physical server estate from 70 to 51 machines, with a consequent reduction in total cost of ownership and improvement in consolidation and resource utilization.

It is estimated that Cisco UCS has helped reduce service provisioning times by around 50 percent, while there has been a marked improvement in server change and decommissioning times, as well as installation and management of ESX hosts. “Server provisioning times have dropped by about 60 percent,” says Mr Drdla, “while power consumption has been cut by 40 percent, cabling by 30 percent, hardware costs by 25 percent, and license costs by 20 percent.”

The company’s data centers handle an average 74 terabytes of data on a daily basis and benefit from improved business continuity. Availability, service delivery, server utilization, and end-user application performance have all improved with UCS. “I was particularly impressed with the way the Cisco MDS 9500 delivers inter-virtual SAN routing to boost storage efficiency, scalability, and high availability,” says Mr Drdla.

Meanwhile, the Nexus 1000V has helped PCS improve virtual machine mobility, creating virtual machines more easily, and facilitating consistent policy and configuration management.



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Overall, PCS sees a three-way pay-off from Cisco UCS and Nexus: “The business has significantly better access to data and applications, our IT department has an easy-to-manage environment, and our customers receive a better service experience,” says Mr Drdla.

Next Steps

Beyond the quality of its technology, PCS values Cisco for its technical expertise and pre- and post-sales support. The company now has a platform for expansion and introducing new services such as virtual desktop integration. PCS is also considering moving its telephony system onto Cisco Unified Communications.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study, please go to:

www.cisco.com/go/datacenter

www.cisco.com/go/ucs

www.cisco.com/go/nexus

For further information on Intel Xeon processors, please go to:

www.intel.com/en_uk/business/itcenter/products/xeon/index.htm

Product List

Data Center Solutions

- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)
 - Cisco UCS B230 M2 Blade Servers
 - Cisco UCS C260 Rack Servers
 - Cisco UCS Manager

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Nexus 1000V Series Switches
- Cisco MDS 9500 Series Multilayer Directors

Processing

- Intel® Xeon® Processor E7 Family

Storage

- EMC Data Domain
- Hitachi VSP
- Qualstar

Applications

- SAP Enterprise Resource Planning Central Component 6.0
- Microsoft SQL AlwaysOn cluster
- Microsoft Exchange DAG cluster
- Microsoft Sharepoint 2013
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 R2, 2008 R2, and 2012
- VMware vSphere
- VMware View



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