

Earth Fare, the healthy supermarket takes on a holistic approach to new-age data center technology solutions that improved their business model

Katalyst Network Group

Katalyst is focused on increasing our client's competitive advantage with an information technology strategy that aligns with their business goals. Katalyst strives for IT designs to accommodate technology solutions that enhance their business capabilities by consistently and securely optimizing their infrastructure.

We offer turn-key technical solutions and integration services. This includes planning, deploying and maintaining information technology communications and security infrastructure. Katalyst partners with industry leading vendors such as Cisco, EMC, Microsoft, and VMware.

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BUSINESS CHALLENGE

A Case for Disaster Recovery: Disaster Recovery is a common discussion plaguing executive management teams in all companies. The challenge being how far do you take it – do you merely protect your data or do you implement a solution that provides complete business continuity. Tasked by the Board of Directors to create a disaster recovery plan, the IT Department, under the direction of Eric Richbourg, designed and implemented a robust business continuity strategy allowing Earth Fare to maintain their core business operations in the event of a disaster.

Earth Fare is an organic food supermarket headquartered in Fletcher, NC. With locations throughout the southeast, the challenge of creating a disaster recovery plan was complicated by the geographic disparity. At the onset of the project design, the traditional data center was comprised of 50-60 physical servers and with multiple connections per server to provide for performance and redundancy. The management of the environment was time-consuming as well as being inefficient in terms of rack space and power consumption. When evaluating data center technologies, Earth Fare saw the value and benefit of investing in the “next generation” of data center technologies. Virtualization was determined to be a key enabler for business continuity.

SOLUTIONS OVERVIEW

When researching virtualization around industry trends and recommended virtualization platforms, the VCE coalition emerged as the “best in breed” technology for building a robust and resilient disaster recovery plan. Earth Fare worked with Katalyst Network Group to design a solution consisting of EMC storage and data protection, Cisco unified server architecture and VMware virtualization software.

“Cisco’s Unified Computing solution, VMware virtualization products, and EMC storage and replication technologies were a natural choice for taking our data center to the next level while simultaneously providing the infrastructure for a reliable business continuity strategy. The Katalyst team is comprised of knowledgeable and devoted professionals who worked with us throughout the project in just the way we needed,” says IT Director Eric Richbourg.

During the implementation phase, KNG installed EMC Clariion SANs to provide the storage necessitated by the consolidation of the physical servers. Cisco’s UCS blade center was chosen as the server architecture based on scalability, virtualization of physical hardware, service profiling, and memory capabilities. EMC’s Recoverpoint was implemented to provide continuous data protection and remote data replication. VMware licensing allowed Earth Fare to consolidate 50-60 physical servers down to 2 UCS blade centers running 7 blades.

RESULTS

Earth Fare had some concerns at the beginning of the project because some of the technologies were first generation products. However, one year later, the data center is fully implemented and Earth Fare can recover all business processes within hours should a disaster arise.

“The benefits of the VCE-based solution developed in partnership with Katalyst are astounding: from single file recovery to restoring a virtual machine to recovering an entire data center, we are confident in our ability to maintain our core business operations and systems at any level or type of disaster, adds Richbourg.

