

Skytap Takes VDIworks Global Training Program “Into the Cloud”

» A good training program can make or break the success of a software product. Nobody understands that reality better than VDIworks, a developer of software that enables IT managers to centrally create, deploy and manage virtual desktops. As a company on the leading edge of technology, VDIworks recently completed an entire overhaul of its training program - transforming it from a physical brick and mortar training lab into an efficient, state-of-the-art virtual classroom “in the cloud”.

Situation

VDIworks focuses on the management and connection of hypervisors and virtual machines (VMs), as well as integrating with physical equipment. The company sells its software through a global network of partners, consisting primarily of worldwide VARs and resellers. Given its reliance on the channel, VDIworks strives to provide as much real-world experience as possible in the classroom by offering highly interactive hands-on training.

Shannon Martin oversees VDIworks training program – from setting up the lab to writing the course material. Recently, she experienced a huge uptick in demand from partners who wanted VDIworks to offer the option of distance training, and from end users who wanted the company to offer a course for early adopters who wanted to test out the software. This led VDIworks to aggressively revamp its training program. Goals of the program included:

- Offer a remote training option for students who could not travel on-site
- Create a new delivery option for end users
- Reduce operating and maintenance costs on a per class basis
- Launch the new program within 30 days

Challenges

With less than 30 days to complete the program and many of the same budgetary and resource constraints as other training programs, Martin came up with a short-list of barriers she would need to address. First, and foremost, the budget was tight with only \$10,000 allocated to the project and no additional headcount. All of the maintenance, configuration and course development would need to be developed solely by Martin. This would be particularly challenging because the VDIworks lab consists of 25% hardware and 75% software, and requires frequent maintenance each time a new build or patch/update is released. As a result, Martin wanted the solution to support on-demand provisioning.

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» CUSTOMER PROFILE

VDIworks allows organizations to easily create, deploy and manage their virtual desktop infrastructure.

» CHALLENGES

- Limited budget
- Students in remote locations
- Time-consuming set-up and tear-down of environments
- 30 day deadline for launch

» SOLUTION

VDIworks adopted Skytap for all their customer training programs.

» BENEFITS

- Developed and launched a complete end-user training course on time and on budget
- Introduced distance training option
- Lowered student tuition costs by 66%, which enabled higher adoption
- Improved set-up and tear-down of complex, multi-tiered environments by up to 80% (one day vs. one week)

» CUSTOMER HIGHLIGHTS

“In the virtual world the possibilities are endless, and when you couple that with the flexibility and cost savings of an on-demand delivery model the solution becomes extremely compelling”

Rick Hoffman, chief executive officer at VDIworks

“Skytap gave us the power to accomplish all of our objectives with a limited budget, and launch a new training program in record time. With the training program in progress, we’re already discovering other ways to leverage Skytap in our business, like building proofs of concept for customers or hosting sales demos and conducting marketing webinars”

Shannon Martin, training manager at VDIworks

The distance training would also be a challenge. Currently, the only training option was a \$3,000, five-day on-site training course at the company's headquarters in Austin, Texas. Creating this class from scratch would require a significant investment in time and resources.

Finally, if Martin was going to add one more class and a distance option, she needed to keep the cost per class and time spent preparing each lab to a minimum. Without some degree of automation to conduct rapid build and configurations, the project would be impossible to execute.

Solution

As a desktop virtualization vendor, the first type of technology VDIworks evaluated was server virtualization management software. "We liked what we saw, but those products only addressed half of what VDIworks wanted to accomplish, and the up-front capital investment and lack of on-demand capabilities were definite deal-breakers for us," said Martin. "Our vision was to take virtualization to the next level, and that's when we found Skytap."

The Skytap Cloud satisfied all of VDIworks' requirements. The on-demand delivery model was ideal for the distance training program, requiring no additional investments in hardware or software. Martin especially liked the virtualization and automation capabilities because they addressed her concerns about spending excessive time and money on procuring, maintaining and updating software configurations for the lab. She also liked the convenience of accessing Skytap's library of resources for other purposes, such as updating training material for new applications like Windows Server 2008 without having to purchase and install the software in their physical lab.

"It's like being a kid in a candy shop - I can easily access Skytap through my browser and quickly setup my lab from a menu of options specifying different hardware, operating systems, software applications and version numbers," said Martin. "At the push of a button, Skytap lets me instantly replicate that configuration onto a student's desktop - whether they are sitting with me in the classroom, or half-way around the world in Tokyo, Japan. Skytap's convenient Learning Management System and template-driven interface is also a huge time-saver."

Benefits

Since making the strategic decision to standardize on Skytap for its training program, VDIworks exceeded all of its goals for the project and is expanding its use of the technology into other departments including sales and marketing.

"The beauty of a cloud-based classroom is that students can't break anything," said Martin. "If that happens, all my students need to do is fallback to the previous configuration, and Skytap puts them right back where they started so I don't have to spend hours re-creating the setup. We're extremely pleased with our results in the lab, and plan to continue using Skytap throughout our business."

Specific benefits VDIworks experienced with the Skytap include:

- Developed and launched end-user training course within 30-day project deadline and \$10,000 budget
- Introduced distance training option
- Lowered student tuition by 66% (\$1,000 vs. \$3,000)
- Improved set-up and tear-down of complex, multi-tiered environments by up to 80% (one day vs. one week)
- Automated software updating and provisioning by up to 75% (2 hours versus 8 hours to distribute a patch)
- Standardized build and configurations with instant fall-back settings, and efficient distributed rollout to remote students
- Facilitated collaboration across globally distributed teams using a shared virtual infrastructure

» To learn how Skytap can deliver value to your organization, contact a cloud computing expert at sales@skytap.com or call us at +1 (888) 759-8278

 www.skytap.com