Comprehensive IT Solution Meets Current and Future Needs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer:
Christian Brothers Services

Location:
Romeoville, IL

Industry:
Healthcare/Insurance/Financial

Business Challenges

+ Consolidate and improve data center, backup and DR operations
+ Switch from CapEx to OpEx
+ Accommodate legacy equipment
+ Free up IT staff
+ Meet HIPAA and other relevant compliance requirements
+ Ensure secure remote access to desktops and data

US Signal Solution

+ Enterprise Cloud
+ Hosted Private Cloud
+ VDI
+ Redundant MPLS WAN
+ Internet with Cloud-Based Advanced Security+
+ EBaaS
+ DRaaS

Business Results

+ Increased IT resilience and security with lower RTO/RPO
+ Predictable cost model for IT with reduction in operational overhead and management of core IT infrastructure, backup and DR
+ Increased IT responsiveness to the business
+ HIPAA-compliant IT infrastructure
+ Flexibility to quickly transition to new ways of working
+ Ability to quickly accommodate IT needs for remote work operations

Planning for what's next is critical in both business and IT. But short of having a crystal ball, it can be hard to do. For example, who would have thought a global pandemic would strike and require so many businesses to implement work-from-home operations? Some were ready; many weren't due to the lack of the right IT infrastructure.

There's no single solution for future proofing IT infrastructure. However, being open to change and looking beyond short-term requirements can make a difference as it did for one nonprofit organization providing services to church organizations in the United States and Canada.

About the Customer

Based in Illinois, Christian Brothers Services (CBS) is a nonprofit organization that administers cooperative programs in health, retirement, property/casualty, and school management; technology services; and financial and administrative consulting to congregations, dioceses and other entities. The company maintains a small in-house IT staff whose responsibilities range from supporting both internal and external customers to developing and implementing IT initiatives to support the organization's mission and continued growth.

The Situation

A few years ago, CBS's IT department found it had a perfect storm brewing. The leases on its on-premises IT equipment and the contract for its backup data center provider were expiring.

It was the ideal time to get out of the IT infrastructure business and outsource to a third-party provider. By doing so, CBS hoped to not only benefit from the switch to OpEx from CapEx that such a move would generate. It wanted to improve the quality of life of its IT staff who were often working long hours, including nights, holidays and weekends.

The Challenges

The organization's leadership knew there would be challenges involved in going the outsourcing route. There was apprehension about trying to consolidate everything with a single provider. There were concerns about finding a company that could deliver the same "TLC" that CBS's own IT staff had been providing.

In addition, the nature of CBS's business would require working with a provider that understood compliance requirements, such as those mandated by HIPAA, as well as data privacy and security needs. There was also the matter of the IBM I series platform, a long-time staple of CBS's IT infrastructure that hosted its ERP, email and file systems. Locality to CBS's X86-64 servers was required to ensure performance. CBS hoped to find a way to switch the entire system to an OpEx model.

Yet another consideration: a large part of CBS's workforce traveled across the US to visit customers. Equipped with company-supplied mobile devices, they needed to be able to securely access CBS applications and data wherever they were. Although CBS's IT leadership didn't know at the time, not too far into the future the COVID-19 pandemic would strike and force CBS to have to quickly switch to work-from-home operations for its entire staff.

CBS cast as wide of a net as possible to include as many service providers as possible. After the list of prospects was narrowed down and the RFP sent, US Signal was selected for the job.

As CBS's CIO Tom Drez put it, "US Signal was able to put together the complete package of products, services and people. We found them to be very knowledgeable, personable and experienced. All things being equal, we're always going to pick based on people."

Click here to view the CBS video testimonial

The US Signal Solution

The US Signal team took the time to understand CBS's mission and business requirements and the needs of its market, as well as its compliance issues and security and user access needs. That knowledge enabled the team to develop a multi-faceted solution that went beyond taking on management of CBS's data centers and meeting its current needs.

It put the critical components in place that could enable CBS to quickly adapt to changing business conditions in the future — like those it would encounter due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Solution components included:

+ US Signal's Enterprise Cloud to handle CBS's X86-64 servers, based on its high availability design, excellent performance, HIPAA-compliant ready architecture, granular scalability and affordable cost.
+ US Signal's Hosted Private Cloud to accommodate the IBM I Series, providing the desired OpEx model, a highly secure environment, scalable resources and the necessary proximity to CBS's X86-64 servers.
+ VMware Horizon View hosted in US Signal's Hosted Private Cloud to securely deliver virtual desktops and apps to remote users. The Hosted Private Cloud's single-tenant environment with PCI-certified and HIPAA-compliant security further enhances overall security and allows for leveraging dedicated compute and storage resources.
+ Enterprise Backup-as-a-Service (EBaaS), a fully managed backup and recovery that frees CBS's IT team from dealing with daily management and troubleshooting, while shortening backup and recovery times, improving bandwidth efficiencies, and shrinking storage requirements.

+ Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS), an SLA-backed, fully managed DR service that offers testing twice a year. It uses geographic diversity and continuous data protection model to provide lower RTO/RPO.
+ Redundant MPLS WAN that uses a diverse last mile and street-level route design to minimize potential downtime associated with loss of connectivity from CBS's site premise to a US Signal Data Center. It also enables more predictable network performance to ensure a quality end user experience.
+ Internet with Cloud-based Advanced Security Plus, a best-of-breed data protection strategy that centralizes internet service at the data center with protection by a Unified Threat Management (UTM) platform.

Business Results

Thanks to US Signal's comprehensive solution, CBS's IT team can be more responsive to the business rather than worrying about what the next hardware or software upgrade is going to be.

The CBS IT staff is spending less time working beyond their normal hours since they can count on US Signal to handle management of the IT infrastructure, DR and backup. In addition, consolidating data center and backup operations with US Signal has greatly improved the organization's RTO and RPO. On average, RPO is below 20 seconds for items protected by US Signal's Zerto-based DR. The RTO for Zerto-protected items is one hour, based on the initial DR test.

While CBS had considered various scenarios as part of its DR planning, a global pandemic was low on the list. Nonetheless, when COVID-19 hit and forced many businesses to implement work-from-home operations, CBS was ready. Employees that didn't have company-issued devices were able to quickly get them and securely use virtual desktop technology to access their full Windows desktops and all of their data — thanks in large part to components of US Signal's multi-faceted solution.

According to Drez, "Outsourcing services to US Signal freed up our whole IT team to focus on emerging issues and higher value activities rather than dealing with IT infrastructure. We didn't have to alter our course for the pandemic year. Our work with US Signal set us up well for that."

The biggest benefit in Drez's mind, however, is that CBS found a long-term partner instead of just another vendor. By entrusting US Signal with its data center, backup and DR operations, CBS has a partner that understands its current needs and continues to help it meet emerging requirements.

Your Solution is Waiting

Learn how US Signal can create a solution tailored for your specific business needs. Call 866.2. SIGNAL or email info@ussignal.com.

ABOUT US SIGNAL

US Signal is a leading data center provider, offering connectivity, cloud hosting, data protection, and disaster recovery services — all powered by its wholly owned and operated, robust fiber network. US Signal also helps customers optimize their IT resources through the provision of managed and professional services.

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