CMA Consulting
EMC VMAX transforms service provider business based on Oracle

ESSENTIALS

Industry

IT Services

Company Size

$80 million in annual revenue

Business Challenges

- Clients demanding faster, more predictable response times for their Oracle applications

- Business expansion and clients' increased use of sophisticated data analytics and mining led to data growth

- Rapid data growth stressed performance and capacity limits of existing storage infrastructure

Solutions

- EMC VMAX 40K

- EMC SRDF

- EMC TimeFinder Clone

- Oracle Database 11g R2, Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC), Oracle Fusion Middleware, Oracle WebLogic, other Oracle applications including ERP, data warehousing, data mining

OVERVIEW

CMA is a leader in IT consulting, systems integration, and hosted services with expertise in enterprise resource planning (ERP), mobile, data warehousing, health and human services, and automated traffic solutions. The firm serves customers across the U.S. from its headquarters in Latham, N.Y., as well offices in Washington, D.C., Phoenix, and Austin.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

CMA faced increasing demand from its business clients to deliver faster, more predictable response times for their Oracle database queries, deep data mining, analytics, and diverse transactional workloads. As CMA's business expanded, rapid data growth also pushed the performance and capacity limits of its legacy storage. In addition, availability was a serious concern since a major outage for a single day could cost the firm millions of dollars in lost revenue.

CMA, after evaluating Oracle Exadata and EMC® VMAX® enterprise storage, chose to address these issues with VMAX.

Brian Dougherty, CMA's Chief Data Warehouse Architect, explains, "We selected VMAX over Oracle Exadata primarily for its availability, scalability, and openness. VMAX is rock-solid and easily handles many gigabytes per second with scalability to petabyte levels that, frankly, Exadata could not do reliably."

SOLUTIONS

CMA deployed EMC VMAX 40K enterprise storage across three data centers spanning hundreds of miles. EMC SRDF® provides storage replication for disaster recovery. CMA also uses EMC TimeFinder® Clone to create local copies for test and development, as well as resolution of support issues.

VMAX runs all of CMA's mission-critical Oracle applications for internal operations and client environments, including Oracle Database 11*g* R2, Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC), Oracle Clusterware, Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Oracle Automatic Storage Management (ASM), Oracle Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), Oracle Warehouse Builder (OWB), Oracle Enterprise Data Integrator, Oracle Data Mining, Oracle Fusion Middleware, Oracle WebLogic, and Oracle Identity and Access Management Suite.

EMC Global Services played a key role in helping CMA to meet its business and hosted customer requirements during the upgrade.

"EMC is a great partner," says Dougherty. "Its Global Services organization provided expertise and support every step of the way—from problem analysis to solution design and implementation. As a result, we have been able to quickly deliver top-notch solutions for our clients."

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Results

- Enabled substantial growth in service provider business
- Reduced time to perform complex queries and analytics from days or weeks to minutes or seconds
- Satisfied stringent SLAs with five-nines availability of business-critical applications
- Delivered consistent, extreme performance even as storage absorbed tens or hundreds of terabytes of new data

PROPELLING SERVICE PROVIDER BUSINESS GROWTH

With a powerful, highly reliable EMC infrastructure, CMA has driven growth of its service provider business substantially by offering enhanced services. The firm can now process client workloads faster than ever before while handling increased data volumes.

"Rather than redesigning storage for each customer, the EMC infrastructure allows us to very quickly take on new customers and support up to petabytes of data with no problem," notes Dougherty.

He adds, "EMC really made CMA a hero with our clients by upping the capabilities of our hosted services. We've transformed what used to be impossible into what's expected. For example, we now crunch through highly complex queries and analytics in minutes or seconds instead of days or weeks. That's invaluable to our clients and our market differentiation."

EXTREME PERFORMANCE ACROSS DIVERSE WORKLOADS

Since deploying VMAX, CMA is able to process unpredictable customer workloads, such as intensive data mining and analytics, with very predictable results. In fact, CMA handles thousands of users running queries against ten-terabyte or larger databases and consistently returns sub-second responses.

"We're in the business of delivering large analytics and deep data mining solutions that have very unpredictable workloads," Dougherty remarks. "VMAX 40K is really the only product on the market that gives us the extreme performance to provide a consistent experience to so many users with such varying workloads. What's amazing is that we can add tens or hundreds of terabytes and the VMAX absorbs it all without missing a beat. That gives us true peace of mind."

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STEPPING UP TO STRINGENT SLAS WITH CONFIDENCE

Reliability and availability have been one of the keys to CMA's success. Dougherty points out that reliability is another major benefit that VMAX brings to the business.

"We run our data centers around the clock," he says. "Our applications can never be down. The VMAX just always works. With VMAX, we know the integrity of our data is safe, and that is the number one business value to our company."

In addition, CMA has stringent service-level agreements (SLAs) with clients. Even 15 minutes of downtime could cost the company hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"The five-nines availability we get with VMAX is absolutely critical to meeting our SLAs," states Dougherty.

EXTRACTING MORE VALUE FROM ORACLE DATABASES

VMAX also provides CMA with the flexibility to respond to unexpected client requirements. CMA can create copies of its databases and easily move them to multiple locations as needed.

"Being able to instantly copy a 20-terabyte database and mount that in less than a minute to another cluster is essential to responding to our clients' changing needs with tremendous agility," states Dougherty. "EMC really increases the value of our Oracle databases and gives us a level of adaptability you just don't get with a closed appliance like Exadata."

When it comes to extracting the most value from mission-critical Oracle environments, Dougherty recommends a best-of-breed approach.

"For CMA, our best-of-breed storage solution for Oracle is EMC VMAX because of the reliability and performance it provides," he advises. "We've worked with other vendors' storage that hasn't been reliable and it's the biggest single problem you can have as a service provider."

He adds, "With VMAX, we can just focus on delivering great solutions to our customers because our storage infrastructure is reliable, rock solid, and high performing."

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.

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