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POINTRIGHT

SETTING THE RIGHT DIRECTION
FusionStorm guides PointRight to a more efficient, higher performance data center built on Cisco UCS and EMC.

PointRight, Inc. is an industry-leading provider of analytics and decision-support services to the healthcare industry. PointRight's Software-as-a-Service solution analyzes the largest privately held dataset related to long-term care patients to help clinicians, facility managers and insurers measure, benchmark and improve financial and operational performance.

PointRight's sophisticated data-analytics solution requires a robust technology infrastructure, but the company's expertise lies in delivering its analytics solution to customers. When it comes to designing data center infrastructure, PointRight turns to the experts at FusionStorm.

"Our primary business is our data analytics— that's what we as a company think about," said Chris Stakutis, VP of Engineering and CTO, PointRight. "Technology behind the data is critically important and modernization of the infrastructure will allow us to do more for our clients; for this, we wanted to call on experts."

Stakutis tasked FusionStorm with consolidating and streamlining PointRight's infrastructure and making it more effective. PointRight had been growing organically, adding storage arrays and refreshing equipment as customer demand increased, but lacked cohesiveness in its technology strategy. The company was dealing with more than 12 technology vendors on a daily basis.

The FusionStorm team performed an analysis to understand what PointRight had in place and where there were performance bottlenecks. FusionStorm put together a plan that would relieve those bottlenecks, reduce the number of vendors and total cost of ownership, simplify system management and provide a platform for future growth.

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"FusionStorm came in and evaluated our server and storage infrastructure, and showed us how we can we can improve utilization and make our data center faster and more efficient," Stakutis said. "They've been a great partner in helping us understand how to enhance performance and scalability while better positioning ourselves for the future."

Improving Efficiency, Reliability and Performance

The first step was to upgrade PointRight's storage infrastructure. PointRight had EMC CLARiiON CX3 and CX4 storage arrays that were end-of-life. FusionStorm designed a new storage infrastructure based upon EMC VNX, providing greater capacity and performance in less physical space.

Next, FusionStorm helped re-architect PointRight's server environment. PointRight had built its server infrastructure on traditional rackmount hardware, and needed an up-to-date solution. Based upon FusionStorm's recommendations, PointRight decided to move to the Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS) platform. Cisco UCS enables PointRight to collapse multiple servers onto a single blade chassis, streamline the data center infrastructure and improve manageability. In addition, PointRight will be able to consolidate services from multiple locations into their co-location facility.

"The solution FusionStorm designed has so much headroom and flexibility it will absorb more functionality than we originally envisioned," said Robert Underwood, IT Director, PointRight. "Our production-critical operations are now in a co-lo, but the other half of our environment is here on site. Over time, we want to remove that equipment and consolidate our operations in the co-lo facility. Cisco UCS will allow us to replace aging hardware. Additionally, the switches are built into the platform, providing much-needed consolidation. We will have a smaller footprint and fewer environments to maintain, and still be able to scale."

"I like the density of Cisco UCS, the price/performance, the scalability and the deep connection with EMC," said Stakutis. "I try to pick best-of-breed products that work well together. I think this is a good combination as we move to a virtualized environment. And FusionStorm is showing us how to exploit this technology, providing a much higher level of support than we were getting in the past. They are a partner with us, not a vendor."

Bringing the Right Resources

FusionStorm's partnership is vital to PointRight, a small business with mission-critical IT needs. FusionStorm is tightly integrated with its partners and was able to get the right resources from EMC and Cisco involved. FusionStorm educated PointRight and provided a team of experts working on a complete solution, not just pieces of technology. FusionStorm also supported PointRight's budgetary requirements by arranging financing through EMC Global Financing and Cisco Capital.

"I don't want vendors, I want partners — companies that truly help us build our organization for the future," Stakutis said. "The FusionStorm team is very knowledgeable and they also brought in the right people from EMC and Cisco. They are teaching us. They have helped us develop a roadmap that will modernize our technology and better serve our customers. They are also providing expert implementation and migration services."

The FusionStorm solution provides PointRight with twice the storage performance and two to three times the server performance in a consolidated, tightly integrated environment. The next steps include replication and virtualization. FusionStorm is helping PointRight improve its backup strategy using EMC's replication options, and leveraging EMC VSPEX Proven Infrastructure and VMware to virtualize PointRight's environment.

"We run a 24x7 production-critical business. Our customers depend on us around the clock. We process 20,000 to 50,000 medical records every day of the week and our customers count on that data coming in, getting analysis and receiving an immediate response. Our new data center environment architected with FusionStorm is critical to our success," said Stakutis.

"FusionStorm has been fantastic to work with throughout this project. And stay tuned — we'll probably do two or three projects with them next year. They're going to be a long-term partner for us."