



PREMIER

Industry

- Healthcare

Geography

- Charlotte, NC and Washington D.C.

Website

- www.premierinc.com

Virtualization environment

- VMware vSphere 6
- VMware Horizon 6
- Traditional storage: EMC

VM profile

- 1,200 development and QA VMs, all Linux and Windows hosts, and 600 virtual desktops

Key challenges

- Lacked insight into the storage subsystems or control over their deployment
- Experiencing IOPS bottlenecks in dev/QA workloads

Tintri solution

- Tintri VMstore™ T650 systems

Primary use case

- Tintri is being used for all dev/QA workloads sent installations.

Business benefits

- Increased IOPS for testing and development environment
- Gained the ability to easily provision storage
- Cut VDI boot up times in half

Tintri Enables Premier to Reduce Healthcare Delivery Costs for Thousands of Medical Providers

Tintri Systems Increase Storage Performance, Improve Visibility, and Speed Provisioning for North America's Largest Healthcare Purchasing Group

Company Information

Premier is a not-for-profit healthcare performance improvement alliance, serving approximately 3,400 U.S. hospitals and 110,000 medical providers across the United States. As the largest healthcare group purchasing organization in North America, the Premier alliance has created one of the most comprehensive databases of actionable data, best practices, and cost reduction strategies. Premier's revolutionary technologies enable its members to collaborate more easily and efficiently, improving its members' quality outcomes, while safely reducing the costs of providing healthcare.

IT Challenges

Bob Lanning is a senior infrastructure engineer at Premier. He is responsible for the company's VMware environment, Cisco UCS, and IBM blade servers. "We were relying on one of the more expensive SCSI-based hardware solutions for storage," according to Lanning. "The systems were exhibiting severe IOPS bottlenecks and the cost of storage was far too high. There was also a huge 'black hole' when our virtualization team tried to manage the environment. We had to rely on our storage specialist team and third-party vendors to troubleshoot and fix any problems in our traditional systems."

Since Premier's storage systems were reaching end-of-life, Lanning and his team were getting ready for a technology refresh. "When we received the renewal quote from the existing vendor, the price was astronomical," Lanning reported. "We decided to look for something that would be a better fit for us from a cost, manageability, and performance standpoint. We needed something that our virtualization team could easily use on their own, lessening our dependence on our company's storage team. When we asked our peers what they were using for flash storage, several of them recommended Tintri. Once we saw the demo, we decided to give Tintri a try."

Going from POC to Production

Lanning originally signed up for a three-month POC on the Tintri systems, but quickly realized he had a winner on his hands. "We tested the Tintri as a target for our new VMware Horizon 6 virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) machines," Lanning said. "We stood up the Tintri T650 POC system and put our VMware VDI workload on it for testing. It worked extremely well for the 600 virtual desktops."

Once Lanning saw how well the Tintri was working for the VDI environment, he decided to expand the POC to the company's development group. "We were having problems with IOPS in our dev/QA environment," Lanning reported. "We assumed it was a problem with the storage, but we couldn't be sure due to lack of visibility into the environment. Once we moved development over to the Tintri POC system, we saw a significant increase in IOPS. We decided it was time to move all of our dev workloads onto the Tintri."

Although the POC was originally scheduled for three months, Lanning made his decision to purchase the Tintri demo unit after only a few weeks. "Halfway through the POC, we knew we didn't want to move anything off of the Tintri," Lanning stated. "So the rest of the POC was just getting used to the hardware and adding more workloads. We went from POC to full production by the time the POC was over."

Smaller Footprint and Lower Utility Bills

Premier now has five Tintri T650 systems - two at its datacenter in Culpeper, Virginia, and three in their Charlotte datacenter in North Carolina. "Tintri spent half a day with us getting the first system racked up and connected," said Lanning. "They showed us how quickly we could set up the system and connect it to our VMware hosts. In just a few hours, we were able to move the majority of our workloads onto the Tintri system. We now have 1,200 development and QA VMs, all of our Linux and Windows hosts, and 600 virtual desktops on the Tintri system."

Tintri systems are also saving on datacenter footprint and power. "Our old EMC arrays filled several large racks," Lanning said. "The Tintri systems need only 3U. Once we move all of the older EMC systems out of the datacenter, there will be a lot of extra space. Plus, we will be able to cut our energy bill significantly as well."

Better Performance

Lanning was also very impressed with the performance of the Tintri systems. "Our VDI boot up times have been cut in half," Lanning reported. "We also eliminated all of the performance issues in our dev/QA environment. Our application developers are telling us that everything is running much faster on the Tintri systems."

Lanning also likes having full access to the storage and the ability to provision it without filling out lengthy storage requests and all of the SCSI-related configurations. "Having full transparency over the storage and the workloads – especially in our VDI deployments, makes it extremely easy to manage without additional training."

Easier Scalability

Tintri is also providing the ability to easily scale the environment on demand. "Before Tintri, it took a lot of time to add additional disk space to one of our VMware hosts," Lanning explained. "We would start by putting in a request for the space, and then we would have to discover the WWNs, present and scan for LUNs, and so on. The entire process was very complex and consumed a lot of team resources. In contrast, Tintri presents itself as just one big data store; we only have to do one quick visual to make sure we have sufficient capacity to handle the load and we're good to go. Tintri's VM-aware storage lets our corporate storage team focus on more strategic tasks, not just helping us manage our VMware workload."

Tintri Support Goes Beyond the Call of Duty

"We had a network configuration problem that was on our side when we first put up the Tintri," Lanning shared. "Our Tintri support rep spent a lot of time making sure that everything was fixed. He even called us back a few times after-the-fact just to make 100% sure that everything was working perfectly."

Lanning also relied on Tintri support when trying to ship new hardware to Premier's co-location site in Culpeper, Virginia. "The Culpeper co-lo site is a very secure facility, and trying to schedule a dispatch of a part and a technician to work at that location is never easy," Lanning said. "I went out to the co-lo facility to help expedite the process, but it just never worked out. Luckily, our Tintri rep saved the day. He had the part shipped directly to his house and drove five hours up to Culpeper to fix it himself the same day. Now that's going well beyond the call of duty. You can't get any better support than that from any technology vendor!"

About Tintri

Tintri builds smart storage that sees, learns and adapts, enabling IT organizations to focus on virtualized applications and business services instead of managing storage infrastructure. Tintri application-aware storage eliminates planning and complex troubleshooting by providing VM-level visibility, control, insight and agility, with all flash performance for virtualized environment and the cloud. Tintri powers hundreds of thousands of virtual machines running business critical databases, enterprise apps, desktops and mobile apps, and private cloud deployments. Tintri helps global enterprises such as AMD, F5 Networks, GE, NEC, NTT, Miller Coors and Time Warner maximize their virtualization and cloud investments. For more information, visit www.tintri.com and follow us on Twitter: @Tintri.

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