

Colliers International EMEA Simplifies Secondary Storage and Reduces TCO by £300K

Industry: Real Estate

Use Case: Data Protection, File Services and Cloud Integration

Technology Alliances: Nutanix, VMware and Microsoft Azure

Channel Partner: CDW



“ With Cohesity, we consolidated our data protection, files and cloud archival on a single, easy to use hyperconverged solution. Instead of weekly backups, with Cohesity we enhanced our data protection and now run backup jobs hourly.

- Paul Khosla, Technical Architect

Overview

Colliers International (NASDAQ: CIGI) is a global commercial real estate services organization with approximately 15,000 employees in more than 500 offices in 68 countries. Founded in 1976, Colliers provides a range of services to commercial real estate users, owners, investors and developers worldwide. Colliers' primary services include consulting, corporate facilities, investment services, landlord and tenant representation, project management, urban planning, property and asset management and valuation and advisory services, and had an annual revenue of over \$2.6 billion (2015).

Colliers International EMEA (Colliers), is a division of Colliers International that has over 60 sites across EMEA. These sites are supported by data centers in UK and Netherlands.

Challenges

In late 2016, Paul Khosla, Technical Architect at Colliers, and his team embarked on a journey to consolidate and simplify their IT operations. The project included renewing and refreshing parts of their infrastructure, making enhancements to their VDI, LAN and WAN, and moving away from a three-tier architecture to hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI).

After replacing their FlexPod (NetApp + Cisco UCS) with Nutanix HCI, Colliers' IT Infrastructure Team (Team) wanted to consolidate their highly fragmented secondary storage into a single, easy to use solution. Colliers was using Hitachi Data Systems storage system for files and objects, which was due for renewal. Their data protection was a combination of multiple point solutions (Microsoft Data Protection Management + Veeam + Supermicro JBODs) that lacked storage optimization features like deduplication, compression, and erasure coding.

The team needed an efficient secondary storage solution and decided to look at the available options. Colliers' IT Team wanted their new secondary storage solution to -

- Help reduce their total cost of ownership (TCO)
- Enable faster time to deployment and
- Seamlessly integrate with their existing Nutanix environment

Solution

After two months of proof-of-concept (POC) between various technology vendors including Cohesity, the decision was made to deploy Cohesity as their next generation secondary storage platform. The original POC focused on the unstructured data use case, but it quickly evolved when the Team realized that besides robust multi-protocol support (NFSv3, SMB 2.x and SMB 3.0), Cohesity provides a complete secondary storage solution that includes data protection, cloud integration and test/dev on a single hyperconverged platform.

During the POC, with just a few clicks, the Team was able to backup VMs, replicate the data to Microsoft Azure, run parallel backup jobs, restore SQL and upgrade the software, all without experiencing any performance degradation or missing a heartbeat. Since then the system has done its job and performed as expected.

Colliers deployed Cohesity C2500 clusters at both their data centers, plus multiple Cohesity DataPlatform Virtual Edition for smaller offices across EMEA. This allowed Colliers to centralize their backups, replicate the data off-site, and offer quick disaster recovery in an event of any infrastructure failure. The Team backed-up all their virtual machines, applications, SQL and IS servers and file storage on Cohesity.

Cohesity's native cloud integration with Microsoft Azure also allowed Colliers to eliminate tapes and archive data to the public cloud. This streamlined the backup process and dramatically reduced Colliers' time to recovery. Going forward, Colliers also plans to leverage Cohesity's zero-cost clone functionality to spin up clones remotely on Cohesity for disaster recovery testing, and confirm that all virtual machines can be restored when required.

Benefits

Cohesity allowed Colliers' IT Team to consolidate their highly fragmented secondary storage onto one simple hyperconverged platform.

- **Simplified Infrastructure:** With Cohesity and Nutanix, Colliers dramatically reduced their data center footprint. From a rack, the Team consolidated everything into 4U. Cohesity also eliminated all silos, and allowed Colliers to protect and consolidate their secondary data on a single platform.
- **Enhanced Performance and Protection:** Instead of backing-up once a day or week, with Cohesity, the IT Team runs backup jobs every hour, without any impact to the users or performance.
- **Lower TCO:** Colliers reduced their three years TCO by £300K, including £250K in CapEx and additional £55K in ongoing OpEx.

Recap

Instead of just addressing Colliers' unstructured data requirements, the Cohesity solution consolidates all secondary storage silos on a single hyperconverged platform. With Cohesity, Colliers reduced their data center footprint and simplified their overall IT operations. The Team also achieved dramatic TCO savings of over £300K with Cohesity.