Leading CRM Software Company Reduces VM Sprawl and Improves Provisioning Times with vCommander™

With over 3,000 global customers, and dedicated to streamlining business and enhancing customer engagement, this leading CRM software company wanted to make their virtual machine provisioning process more efficient.

Manual provisioning was causing business delays

In an effort to promote efficiency, the IT Operations team were asked to automate as much of the day-to-day tasks as they could, including implementing a self-service portal solution to free up IT resources and reduce the provisioning times of virtual machines for end users.

With up to 100 VMs being provisioned manually each month by a team of five, the process involved initiating a request via email, building the systems, and then provisioning with the correct applications, all of which could take days from the initial request.

When looking for a solution, multiple products were tested, but in the end, Embootics vCommander was chosen. “We didn’t get very far with some of the other vendors,” said the company’s Principal Data Center Engineer. “They were too expensive and not flexible enough in terms of the workflows and scripting that they were able to do.”

“Now, we have all of our workflows in automated processes,” continued the Director of IT Systems Services. “The users can request a system and they will get an email confirmation back in less than an hour, depending on any management approval cycles that may be in place, saying that their system is ready to go.”

The faster turn-around time and self-service functionality allowed this IT team to centralize their structure and support a 25% growth in the number of VMs.

“There is just a faster turn-around time and offering of self-service that we didn’t have before, allowing us to centralize our IT structure and support a growth in VMs of about 25%.”

- Director of IT Systems Services
In addition to using an approval process for some of the 22 internal teams that request virtual machines, the company also implemented quotas to manage the resources being requested. To manage VM sprawl, they implemented a default expiry policy of 90 days after which systems are automatically expired if they are no longer required.

"We use our own software for as many different applications as we can within the company," continued the Director.

"We have to do upgrades and refreshes, and it was always a manual process that involved standing up additional environments. We automated as much as we could from end to end with the vCommander templates. Users now just fill in the form within vCommander and then they hit go, and the upgraded system is deployed."

**Reports are used to educate the business**

When the IT Operations team calculated the time saved by implementing automation of the provisioning process, it came out to six weeks over the course of a year. With over 2,500 virtual machines in the environment, and approximately 40 different systems to choose from in the service catalog, the reporting functions of vCommander are used extensively.

"I like the reporting feature. I think there’s a lot of cool reports in there," said the Principal Data Center Engineer. "A lot of good information comes out of them. We use rightsizing, offline aging, and showback reporting, so that we can educate the different teams on what they are actually costing the organization, making them aware of what they are asking for and the impact it is having on the company."

**Easy to implement and configure**

The company has automated as many of the processes that they can, from building out an Apache front end to creating a database, installing application software, integrating to Docker for container support, and assigning IP pools.

"Assigning IP Pools is a big time saver over manually typing in a stack of IPs, and we are removing the chance for any manual errors," continued the Principal Data Center engineer. "It was very easy to implement and configure—I just pointed vCommander at our vCenter and just started configuring everything. It was well designed in terms of how to set up a portal, and it was simple to do a PoC with for sure. Then when it came to the build-out for production, it was the exact same process. It just worked."

"We are very happy with vCommander," concluded the Director. "It has saved us a lot of time in different aspects of the functions that we do, management’s been happy with it, and other teams are now discovering it or are seeing the benefits of it. I can see us expanding our footprint of the product in the near future."

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**About Embotics**

Embotics is the cloud automation company for IT organizations and service providers that need to improve provisioning or enable self-service capabilities. With a relentless focus on delivering a premier user experience and unmatched customer support, Embotics is the fastest and easiest way to automate provisioning across private/public/hybrid cloud infrastructures. Its flagship product, Embotics vCommander, is used by organizations such as Nordstrom, NASA, Fanatics, and Informatica.

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