

## Savers Reduces Administrative Overhead by Automating Development Workloads

The Savers family of stores is a for-profit, global thrift retailer offering great quality, gently used clothing, accessories and household goods. Operating in over 330 locations, and with 22,000 employees, IT struggled to satisfy a growing demand for resources without an increase in IT team headcount.

### Manual processes impeded the business

Headquartered in Bellevue, WA, Savers had documented a manual process for deploying Virtual Machines (VMs) in their development lab environment, including how to build a VM, deploy a system, and how to customize a VM. Once customization was complete, the system was passed to the applications team, who also performed manual installation before finally passing the system off to the end consumer.

Not only was this manual process time-consuming at the front end, but finding information months later, such as who requested, approved and deployed each

system, was also a time-consuming task.

"The biggest catalyst was getting the message from our business saying that they want to continue to consume more and more resources while maintaining the current headcount," said Charles Blair, IT Infrastructure Manager at Savers. "Basically that ended the manual model and we knew at that point that the only way forward was going to be technology."

The search then began for a solution that provided a level of automation, scalability and efficiency that would enable the IT team to deliver more services, more quickly.



*Putting control in the end users hands allows them to have the immediate gratification that they can control when a system is deployed or retired. That's been very powerful.*

– Charles Blair,  
IT Infrastructure  
Manager



**SAVERS**

After evaluating several products, the team chose Embotix vCommander because it delivered the full list of initial requirements, plus additional features that the company can grow into in the future. "The lack of intrusiveness that vCommander offered was key," continued Blair. "Other products had hooks into the VMware infrastructure that would really affect our upgrade and migration strategies. With vCommander simply overlaying on top of the infrastructure and not requiring any agents to be installed, those concerns were alleviated."

### The lab automation use case

Senior Systems Administrator Henry Oh said of the implementation: "You can have vCommander installed out of the box and up and running in a matter of hours once you understand how everything flows with the workflows or completion approvals. It's pretty straight forward."

Lab Automation was the organization's initial, and still primary, use case. "We wanted to take a segment of production, such as a platform with web services, applications, database, or authentication with the domain controller, and create linked clones in a test environment. Then we would run through an upgrade or a testing scenario or even some data manipulation on what is essentially a real-time clone of the production system," said Blair. Creating linked clones in sandbox environments allows Savers to carry out destructive testing to validate that they can upgrade those systems with a very high success rate.

Savers uses vCommander IP pools for network zones and to statically assign IP addresses to the deployed servers. Blair continued: "vCommander brings the additional value of ensuring that the service is safe and secure, and also introduces the high availability aspect to it."



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### Reducing administrative overheads

Integration with engineering environments and tools such as MuleSoft was the focus of the initial rollout, but now the team is seeing a significant amount of interest from other departments. "We're still defining the resource pools and domains that we want for these teams, and what we're hoping for is to have another strong win just like we did with the successful integration of MuleSoft with vCommander.

By reducing administrative overhead, we can enable the supporting infrastructure teams to spend their time vision casting for engineering and making other architectural changes, rather than spending time operationalizing what can be automated," concluded Blair.



### About Embotix

Embotix 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, Embotix is the fastest and easiest way to automate provisioning across private/public/hybrid cloud infrastructures. Its flagship product, Embotix vCommander, is used by organizations such as Nordstrom, NASA, Fanatics, and Informatica.



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