Case Study: One Company's Journey to a Modern Disaster Recovery Solution- DRaaS

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Who should attend this presentation
- Project Background
- Process/Timeline
- Lessons Learned
- Update: Where we are today

Who should attend this Presentation?

- Those with traditional DR (Disaster Recovery) interested in learning about DRaaS (Disaster Recovery as a Service)
- Those without a DR program or who don't have adequate DR
- Those not satisfied with their current DR
- Those considering DRaaS as a gateway to utilizing the cloud
- Those interested in more information or best practices
- Those who utilize DRaaS and are just curious

About the Speaker

- Craig Rhodes
  - Managing Director, Data Center Services at Structured
  - Data Center and Program Management Consultant
  - Member, BICSI, AFCOM, ASIS, Infrastructure Masons, PMI
  - BS in Finance, MS in Organization Development
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Project Background

- Health care company recently completed data center migration to a co-lo data center facility, utilizing former on-premises production data center for Disaster Recovery

- Just months later, there was a leadership decision to undertake a five-year, multi-million-dollar campus overhaul

- The DR data center was consuming "premium office space" – and became a prime candidate to relocate

- Considered co-lo, DRaaS, began in early 2018

DRaaS Process/Timeline

Assessment and Feasibility

Inventory/Tiering

RFI/RFP/Vendor Selection

Contracting
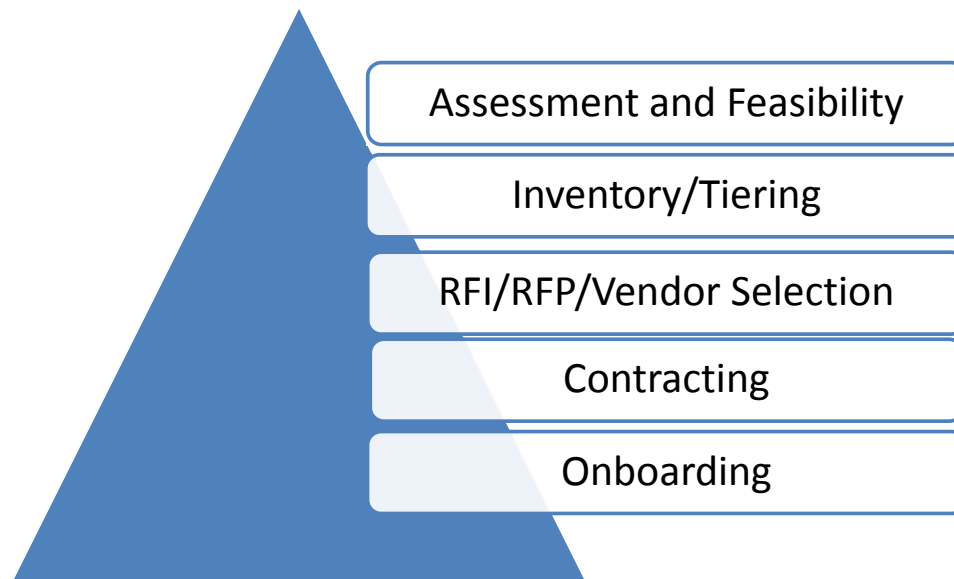
Onboarding

In our case, it was approximately 10 months from Assessment start to Contract signing. Onboarding is a 6-12-month process depending on size and complexity.

Assessment and Feasibility

- Assessment of DRaaS and feasibility for use
- Considered co-lo space to understand costs, services, etc.
- Inventory first
  - Number of servers (physical vs. virtual), data volumes, hardware platform dependencies, latency considerations
- Documented requirements to support RFI process
  - Cybersecurity, performance, bandwidth, application access

Inventory/Tiering

- Recommend detailed server and application inventory

- Key to have DR tiering (Tier 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)

  – Informs SLA conversation and data protection strategy

  – Determines server type: always-on, warm, cold standby

- VERY helpful to know current DR costs

  – Include allocations for internal labor, testing, equipment, rent, depreciation, circuits, etc.

- Allows for comparison of IaaS, Co-lo, Cloud, or DRaaS

RFI/RFP/Vendor Selection

- Create RFI document to facilitate evaluation
- Develop selection criteria to score and rank vendors
- Develop realistic schedule for the RFP process
- Allow time to score, review, conduct bidder's conference
  - If results are not what you'd expect, don't be afraid to course correct - ensure security is not an afterthought!

RFI/RFP/Vendor Selection (continued)

- Do not underestimate the importance of due diligence
- Visit vendor facilities, utilize a scoring model
- Are vendors flexible or inflexible?
- How important is your business to them?
- Are vendors current with the times, or behind?
- What is the vendor relationship with the data center operator?

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Contracting

- Have regular meeting cadence for contract/negotiation process
- Document agreement on key points
- Contract considerations
    - Build in mechanisms for growth and expansion (or reduction)
    - Minimize any custom hardware that requires hosting
    - Make the contract SLA (service level agreement) driven

Onboarding

- Pre-Onboarding
  - Tech session prior to start of onboarding in January.
  - Hold team events to build strong cross-team bond.
- Onboarding
  - Hold a kickoff meeting, review project plan, set realistic schedule.
  - Understand data volumes and equipment lead/build times.
  - Document team commitments and maintain team consistency.
  - Manage risks and address issues in a written log.
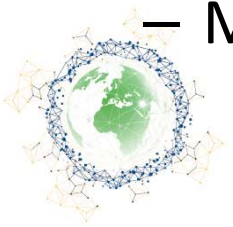
Implementation

- With service provider, built out data center over a 6-month period
- Replicated 50+ applications, 450 servers, 500Tb data
- Data replication and process work were key drivers
- Partnership, process, scope management were keys to success

Lessons Learned

- Create opportunities to bring vendor and tech teams together
- Order circuits during contracting phase- (cancel later if needed)
- Recommend dual circuits to expedite replication
- Treat vendor with respect; consider them an extension of your team
- Organizational change- address concerns around outsourcing
- Cultivate executive involvement and buy-in along the way

Other Key Considerations

- Build a strong Partnership
- Ensure vendor is financially strong, do reference calls
- Consider vendors from Gartner/Forrester as a starting point
- Consider utilizing external assistance from independent consulting firm to help manage the process (PM, Architecture)
- Include Cybersecurity at the beginning
- Decisions around scope are difficult but critically important

Update: Where we are today

- Continual work on inter-company processes
- Decommissioning legacy DR environment
- Continue to maintain strong partnership with vendor

Questions – Please contact Craig Rhodes at
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