

Highland Bank Empowers Financial Services Professionals with End User Computing

Nutanix enables bank to respond fast to COVID-19 pandemic with remote connectivity and improved business continuity

INDUSTRY

Financial services

BENEFITS

- Remote work support enables provider to keep operating even in the midst of a historic pandemic
- Improved backup and DR enhances availability of financial services systems
- Consolidated management lets small IT staff do more with fewer resources

SOLUTION

- Nutanix Cloud Platform
- Nutanix AHV
- HPE ProLiant servers

Applications

- Citrix VDI solutions
- Financial services SaaS applications
- Web servers
- File servers

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Founded in 1943, Highland Bank is a privately-held, business-focused bank that prides itself on its ability to deliver value to its customers as a trusted advisor. Based in Minnesota, its expertise is business lending, with an emphasis in real estate lending, commercial/industrial loans, and government-backed loan solutions. To improve management and performance of its key banking processes, Highland Bank replaced its outdated network infrastructure with a flexible hyperconverged Nutanix solution. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the Bank was ready to easily support employees working remotely using Citrix VDI desktop environment, staying open for business with minimal business disruption.

“Nutanix gave us the ability to shift the majority of our business to work from home with no major changes to the infrastructure. We went from five to ten remote users a day to about 80, and they can use their Macbooks, Windows laptops, phones, and tablets to access our environment from anywhere.”

– Craig Boivin, Chief Technology Officer, Highland Bank

CHALLENGES

Highland Bank has been a fixture in the Twin Cities for 75 years and has grown to \$500 million in assets operating out of five offices, enhanced by technology and a robust online presence. Highland Bank believes every customer interaction contributes to the building of a stronger foundation and relies on its infrastructure to deliver personalized banking experiences. When its network devices began to show their age, the Bank knew the time was right to migrate to a more advanced virtualized infrastructure.

“We were running out of resources in our environment and needed to update the equipment we had,” said Craig Boivin, Chief Technology Officer at Highland Bank. “Instead of investing in a short-term fix like adding more RAM, we decided to refresh our infrastructure.”

SOLUTION

Boivin and his team replaced the Bank’s traditional network infrastructure devices with a Nutanix hyperconverged infrastructure solution. A Citrix-based virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) environment lets users access the banking and productivity resources they need, securely, from any device or environment. Four Citrix EFX hosts residing on HPE ProLiant servers support Citrix infrastructure servers, delivery controllers, routing services servers, storefront servers, and Citrix NetScalers, as well as approximately 100 pooled VDI virtual machines. The HPE ProLiant servers and the Nutanix solution work smoothly together to deliver the performance and scalability that Highland Bank requires to support its most essential banking operations.

The Bank had always envisioned its environment as a nimble platform that could support employees in any location, and the consolidated Nutanix solution provides the flexibility it needs for connections anywhere. No matter where a user accesses the solution, they still connect smoothly and intuitively via the same Citrix environment.

“We use thin clients for logging in the majority of our users internally in our offices,” said Boivin. “We also have some desktop PCs at our front teller stations, but everybody still logs into the same Citrix environment from any machine. We have an external Citrix site, so if you work from home or anywhere in the world, you can still access a URL and log into our environment remotely.”

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

The Nutanix solution was architected for agility and flexibility, and it quickly proved its value when business conditions underwent a dramatic shift. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in early 2020, Highland Bank was fully prepared to support a highly remote workforce.

“We had done such a good job in investment that we had the flexibility to enable our employees to work anywhere, and the entire process was seamless for us,” said Boivin. “When we moved more than half our employees to work from home and converted to drive-through service, we had all the components in place. We didn’t need to scramble at all, and the Nutanix and Citrix solution gives us the ability to run on any advice.”

Even as more users switched to remote work, Nutanix delivered not only great flexibility but strong performance.

“Our infrastructure is faster and more responsive, which is a really big plus,” said Boivin. “It’s not only good for IT, but good for the user as well in terms of their end-user experience.” The hyperconverged infrastructure platform also helps Highland Bank do more with its small team of IT professionals.

“Instead of running off separate servers with a SAN setup, it was great condensing everything into a single hyperconverged infrastructure to support all our technology,” said Boivin. “We can manage everything from one console, and get all the alerts, and see and resolve issues there. I really like the one-click upgrades for management as well. We have a lot less hardware to deal with, and the ability to manage the solution with minimal human resources is amazing.”

NEXT STEPS

Highland Bank is continuing to evaluate new ways to improve the performance and security of its network, and Nutanix offers plenty of possibilities.

“Nutanix really opens our horizons as to what kinds of security we can apply,” said Boivin. “For example, we can install McAfee antivirus at the Nutanix level, which is really cool.”



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