Firm drives growth with latest operating system

Leading provider of passenger, ramp and cargo-handling services Menzies Aviation successfully deploys Windows Server 2012 and significantly reduces software costs

“The density of the Dell PowerEdge R720 servers will have a direct impact on the future of our company. We’ll be able to roll out Windows Server 2012 and Hyper-V, maximising the virtualization capabilities.”

Justin Apps, Head of Enterprise Architecture, Menzies Aviation

Customer profile

Company: Menzies Aviation
Industry: Aviation
Country: United Kingdom
Employees: 16,000 globally
Website: menziesaviation.com

Business need

Menzies Aviation wanted to drive expansion while reducing costs. Its key objectives included incorporating acquired businesses and new employees into the network more efficiently.

Solution

The company worked with a Microsoft Strategist from Dell to install Windows Server® 2012 software on Dell infrastructure, including Dell™ PowerEdge™ R720 server technology.

Benefits

- Menzies Aviation increases business agility with virtual domain controllers
- Business cuts Windows Server 2012 deployment time in half with direct access to Microsoft
- Company can grow without physically scaling IT
- Employees work more effectively with better mobility
- Business expects significant reduction in software costs

Solutions featured

- Data Center Virtualization
- Consulting Services
- Mobile Computing
- Networking
- Storage
Menzies Aviation provides passenger, ramp and cargo-handling services to customers worldwide. It is the fastest growing – and second largest – ground and cargo-handling organisation in the world. It also owns Air Menzies International, the world’s only global wholesale freight forwarder.

The business operates at 136 airports in 32 countries, with annual revenue of more than US$1.1 billion and employing around 18,000 highly trained people. Best-in-class safety and security, as well as great customer service, are central to its success – setting it apart from other handlers.

In this industry, margins are tight and the price of failure is high. Even minor disruptions to services can have major effects on passengers and the transport of cargo. This is why Menzies Aviation is constantly looking for ways to boost efficiency and protect the smooth running of its operations. Increasingly, the company sees IT as the catalyst in achieving these business goals and invests heavily in developing its infrastructure. Martin Gallington, Senior Vice President of IT at Menzies Aviation says: “IT is transforming businesses worldwide, and it’s no different at Menzies Aviation. We work more closely with personnel than ever before, and the company looks to us for solutions for continued growth and development.”

With the need to comply with strict aviation and government regulations on data access, the IT team couldn’t simply streamline the existing integration process because of the security risks. Much of the information held is highly confidential and must be protected for the safety of passengers and crews.

Customer aims to simplify business expansion through IT
The company wanted to make it easier to integrate new businesses. It was complex to add these companies to the corporate network and give their employees access to Menzies Aviation applications. One idea was to virtualize the Active Directory® used to manage network access, but this wasn’t possible with the software that was in place. Justin Apps, Head of Enterprise Architecture at Menzies Aviation, says: “We were running Active Directory in a Windows Server 2003 landscape. Our version wasn’t designed for a virtualized environment, so there was the possibility of issues and downtime.”

Technology at work

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“It’s finding a balance whereby data is secure, but quickly accessible to the right people through multiple devices,” says Apps. “We needed to update our identity management system, so we could simplify the whole integration process and make it easier for Menzies Aviation to grow.”

**Business ensures IT drives growth with Windows Server 2012**
Menzies Aviation achieved its goal by joining the Windows Server® 2012 Rapid Deployment Programme (RDP) with the assistance of Dell. This Microsoft programme is designed to obtain feedback on new software before it’s released to market and to help companies prepare for future migrations. The company worked with a Microsoft Strategist from Dell to virtualize its Active Directory® with Windows Server 2012 and simplify the identity management system.

**IT completes research and deployment 50 per cent faster with direct access to Microsoft**
The IT team saved time during the RDP as a result of the close ties that Dell has with the Windows Server 2012 product teams at Microsoft. Apps says: “We completed research and development for our Windows Server 2012 RDP 50 per cent quicker with Dell, because it had direct access to Microsoft. In fact, our Microsoft Strategist from Dell really made it a success. He had the commitment to make it happen.”

**Menzies Aviation can increase agility with virtual domain services**
As a result of the RDP, Menzies Aviation proved that it could accommodate rapid growth more effectively with Dell and Windows Server 2012. Apps and Dell created a lab environment featuring a Dell™ PowerEdge™ R720 server running a virtualized instance of Active Directory Domain Services in Windows Server 2012. They took a snapshot of the company’s production data, moved it to the lab environment and ran it against the virtual domain services software.

Apps saw that it was possible to centrally manage access across the business worldwide. This would help avoid security breaches as the company added personnel and computers to the network. Apps says: “It worked without any major issues. Using Dell 12th-generation servers running Windows Server 2012, we could successfully virtualize our domain services – making it easier to integrate new personnel and improve our business flexibility.”

**IT gains deeper insight into Windows Server 2012**
At this point, Apps widened the Windows Server 2012 trial to look at other areas where the operating system could add value to the company. “This is where having a Microsoft Strategist from Dell really helped in our assessment of Windows Server 2012,” says Apps. With his knowledge of Menzies Aviation and his deep insight into the Microsoft software, the strategist quickly identified where the trial should be extended. He also arranged for Menzies Aviation to join the Windows Server 2012 Technology Adoption Programme (TAP), which is similar to the RDP initiative, but takes place earlier in the software development cycle. Apps says: “It was great to see that Dell was in our corner, trying to maximise the value of our Windows Server 2012 trials. By joining the Windows Server 2012 TAP, we could potentially increase the value of the software and continue getting production-level support from Microsoft.”

**Business can expand without physically scaling IT**
Menzies Aviation knows it can continue growing without a corresponding increase in its IT infrastructure. The virtual machine density from Dell PowerEdge server technology and Windows Server 2012 with Hyper-V™ virtualization technology was greater than Apps had seen before.
He says: “The density of the Dell PowerEdge servers will have a direct impact on the future of our company. We’ll be able to roll out Windows Server 2012 and Hyper-V, maximising the virtualization capabilities. The firm’s IT now has the agility to deliver new services in line with demand. At the same time, the physical footprint of the data centre won’t increase, keeping down costs.”

**Menzies Aviation will boost value of IT while lowering operating costs**

Apps also saw other ways in which the Dell 12th-generation server could support the business. He particularly liked that the servers could run at higher temperatures than previous generations. Apps says: “You can see how the combination of Dell PowerEdge servers and Windows Server 2012 will change the dynamics of your data centre. There is the density of the servers, their power to run at higher temperatures, plus the unlimited scalability of Hyper-V.”

**Employees can deliver greater value with better flexibility**

The business can push the development of mobile and remote working using Windows Server 2012 running on a Dell platform. Thanks to improved software code in the Microsoft system, staff operating remotely have better access to rich graphics and 3D content through the wide area network. Plus, advancements in Active Directory® services mean it’s easier for IT administrators to lock-down employee mobile devices. Gallington says: “We can develop our mobile working strategy with the support of Dell solutions and Windows Server 2012. It will enable personnel to work effectively from more locations and ultimately deliver greater services.”

**Menzies Aviation predicts significant reduction in software costs**

Looking ahead, Apps predicts that Menzies Aviation could see substantial savings in software licensing through Windows Server 2012. In turn, these savings will help the business maintain its margins at a time when customers are applying pressure on prices. The company could consolidate many of its third-party software solutions and support more of the business with Windows Server 2012. This means migrating from VMware to Hyper-V™ company-wide and swapping out its Citrix technology for RemoteFX and Terminal Services in Windows Server 2012. Apps says: “For example, we can buy a Windows Server 2012 Datacenter licence with Software Assurance and get the software and virtual machines. I estimate that we could significantly reduce our software spend with our Windows Server 2012 platform running on Dell.”

**Company prepares data centres for continued business expansion**

Following the success of the RDP, Menzies Aviation began a refresh programme for its active-active data centres. With many of the existing Dell solutions coming to the end of their life cycles and the release of Windows Server 2012, the company thought it was the right time to revamp both sites. Gallington says: “We saw that the best way to support the business was to continue our relationship with Dell.” Menzies Aviation has placed orders for Dell PowerEdge R620, R720 and R820 servers as well as Dell EqualLogic™ PS6100 storage arrays. It also plans to deploy Dell PowerVault™ MD storage arrays, Dell PowerVault TL tape libraries and Dell PowerConnect™ 7048 switches. Apps says: “IT can help drive business growth at Menzies Aviation with the refresh of our data centres using Dell 12th-generation servers. They will provide greater density and virtual server capacity so that the business can expand and we can deliver more services without increasing our data-centre footprint.”

**Microsoft**

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