



# Freehills delivers on commitment to green efficiency with a 10 percent reduction in energy consumption

- Cloud computing
- Green efficiency
- Services
- Server virtualization



“Our IT team can now provide the green committee with real numbers on electricity savings. We’ve already reduced power consumption by almost 10 percent in our main data center.”

*Gary Adler, infrastructure manager, Freehills*

## Customer profile

Company:	Freehills
Industry:	Law
Country:	Australia
Employees:	1,900
Website:	<a href="http://www.freehills.com.au">www.freehills.com.au</a>

## Business need

To reduce infrastructure space and meet projected growth and green efficiency goals, Freehills needed to replace their legacy system with an updated server and storage solution.

## Solution

Working with Dell™ Consulting Services, the firm deployed a virtualized platform using Dell PowerEdge™ servers and VMware® vSphere™ software.

## Freehills

### Benefits

- Infrastructure costs reduced by virtualization and 83 percent reduction in physical servers
- Operations significantly improve with ease of taking virtual servers into production
- Firm meets green committee goals with up to 10 percent reduction in power consumption

**Freehills** is an Australian-based international law firm providing commercial legal advice to clients around the world. Established in 1852, the firm acts for more than 75 percent of Australia's top 100-listed companies. Freehills has approximately 1,900 lawyers located across four offices in Australia and seven offices in South East Asia, and the firm has a strong green initiative in place to drive efficient use of resources.

"The high availability we have achieved through our new solution augments our disaster recovery strategy and our business continuity strategy."

*Gary Adler, infrastructure manager, Freehills*

Occupying around 15 floors at their Sydney office, which includes the main data center, Freehills' data requirements had grown exponentially in recent years. The firm was outgrowing its primary data center in Sydney however, relocating the data center was not an immediate option as Freehills was looking for a more cost-effective and timely solution.

As well as the need to become more efficient in responding to the needs of the business and being able to scale quickly to meet demand, the IT team was facing pressure from the firm's green committee, as approximately 60 percent of the electricity costs of the firm were being drawn from the physical infrastructure with the Sydney data center.

#### **Virtualization viewed as effective solution to ease data center capacity**

Although several of their competitors had already moved to a virtualized platform, Freehills wanted to ensure high availability and minimize the risks associated with migrating from a physical to a virtualized infrastructure. As their document management system was the core technology of the firm, Freehills had to ensure high availability and a seamless user experience for its lawyers.

Gary Adler, infrastructure manager, Freehills, comments, "In the early days, we assessed there was a risk with virtualization around ensuring high availability and performance when consolidating. We wanted to ensure we were providing our firm with a more robust solution all round before we migrated to a new platform."

Prior to engaging with a solutions provider, Freehills assessed virtualization software and selected VMware due to its market leading reputation, functionality, and performance. To meet its business and energy efficiency needs, and with the main data center reaching near capacity, Freehills made the decision to migrate to a virtualized infrastructure using VMware vSphere 4.0 Enterprise Plus edition software.

#### **Confidence in return on investment drives decision-making process**

Through VMware, Freehills received a recommendation on working with Dell to deploy the virtualized environment. Although Freehills had an existing relationship with Dell on laptops, desktops and other components, the firm had yet to engage Dell in a major services project.

Gary Adler, infrastructure manager, Freehills explains, "Our relationship with Dell has grown steadily over the

#### **Technology at work**

##### **Services\***

[Dell™ Consulting Services](#)

[Dell ProSupport](#)

– [Mission Critical option](#)

– [four hour response time](#)

##### **Hardware**

[Dell PowerEdge™ R710 servers](#) with Intel® Xeon® processors

##### **Software**

[VMware® vSphere™ 4.0 Enterprise Plus edition](#) virtualization software

past ten years, however I previously saw the company only as a hardware provider. The depth of the proposal transformed our view of Dell into a high-quality, competitive service and solutions provider.”

In assessing the investment for the solution, Freehills was convinced that a return on investment (ROI) could be achieved by the firm within several years. “A real driver to deploying the virtualization solution was that the ROI was very significant,” confirms Adler. Freehills engaged Dell Consulting Services to deliver a tiered storage environment for a virtual infrastructure within a three-month time line.

#### **Infrastructure costs reduced by virtualization and 83% reduction in physical servers**

During the first phase of the project, Freehills virtualized 35-40 percent of their servers and aims to double this figure within the next year. As physical servers are replaced, Freehills will replace them with virtual servers where possible. “We have a policy for adding applications – virtual first, physical only if absolutely required,” states Adler. The firm will virtualize primarily documents and files from the firm’s recently upgraded document management system, email, and the practice billing system.

Deploying a standard server platform policy to ensure business continuity, the firm consolidated onto Dell PowerEdge R710 servers across its main Sydney data center and its disaster recovery site. The firm has consolidated the physical server environment by 83 percent using VMware vSphere 4.0 Enterprise Plus

edition software, which will also translate to significant savings on infrastructure costs.

#### **Firm’s commitment to green initiatives supported by up to 10 percent reduction in data center energy consumption**

Freehills has a dedicated green team in each state and a dedicated sustainability consultant advising the firm. Freehills’ ability to deliver green services is important to the firm’s reputation and their clients. The move to virtualization supports the firm’s green committee initiatives by delivering efficiently managed costs and resources.

Adler explains the importance of energy reduction as the IT team has been encouraged to be as green as possible. Says Adler, “Our IT team can now provide the green committee with real numbers on electricity savings. We’ve already reduced power consumption by almost 10 percent in our main data center.”

#### **Operations significantly improve with ease of taking virtual servers into production**

The IT team is able to quickly provision new virtual servers, making the business more agile and responsive to its staff and clients. Freehills estimates that the firm has reduced this process from weeks to hours. “When a new project begins for one of our business units or legal teams, instead of taking two weeks to order, build, configure, and place a new server into production, the entire process can be completed in a single day,” comments Adler.

“With virtualization, the restoration process is almost immediate, and our end users experience minimal disruption.”

*Gary Adler, infrastructure manager, Freehills*

### **Business continuity strategy supported through virtualization**

Freehills has achieved greater efficiencies in data center operations in both server provisioning and overall management, and significantly improved recovery times. "The high availability we have achieved through our new solution augments our disaster recovery strategy and our business continuity plans," confirms Adler.

In the event of hardware failure, previously it could take the firm anywhere from two hours to one day to rebuild a server or restore an image on a spare server. "With virtualization, the restoration process is almost immediate, and our end users experience minimal disruption," confirms Adler.

### **Deployment process simplified with guidance from Dell Consulting Services**

Dell Consulting Services provided Freehills with a single point of contact, which was a critical feature of the engagement. "Despite the fact we were dealing with multiple vendors, we had one point of contact with Dell. This really simplified the process and made it as efficient as possible for our team," says Adler.

A project manager from Dell worked closely with the Freehills' infrastructure team, and a technician was on site throughout the project. "The service engagement has been very impressive. It's really opened our eyes to the services Dell can offer," says Adler. "Furthermore, our team is confident in handling any issues which could arise, as there was a strong handover from Dell during deployment, along with internal training on site," explains Adler.

### **Infrastructure protected with Dell ProSupport**

Following the rollout of the solution, Freehills purchased Dell ProSupport with a four hour onsite response time to support its mission critical applications, providing the firm with 24/7 access to Dell experts to ensure the firm's data centers stay up and running. However, due to the reliability of the solution, Freehills is yet to request support.

For more information go to:  
[dell.com/casestudies](http://dell.com/casestudies) and  
[dell.com.au](http://dell.com.au)



*Gary Adler, infrastructure manager, Freehills*

## **Freehills**

The Efficient Enterprise runs on Dell: [efficiententerprise.com](http://efficiententerprise.com)

\*Availability and terms of Dell Services vary by region. For more information, visit [dell.com/servicedescriptions](http://dell.com/servicedescriptions)  
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