CASE STUDY

GUIDEONE TRANSFORMS TO FUTURE-STATE IT FOR COST AVOIDANCE AND HIGHER PERFORMANCE

THE CLIENT

GUIDEONE INSURANCE

Headquartered in West Des Moines, IA, GuideOne Insurance (GuideOne) serves over 51,000 policyholders in all 50 states with commercial property and liability insurance. They serve churches, nonprofit organizations, small businesses and educational institutions.

THE CHALLENGE

The growing GuideOne needed to migrate its on-premises infrastructure to the cloud to reduce its data center footprint, gain higher performance and avoid growth-related resource costs, but the insurer lacked the internal cloud-adoption resources to modernize.

THE SOLUTION

Sirius leveraged its cloud, networking and security expertise to support GuideOne's transformation from a legacy environment of approximately 850 virtualized workloads, to a future state of IT with VMware Cloud™ on AWS. GuideOne's migration was seamless, fast, and cost- and resource-efficient. Sirius also provided a custom framework that secures and easily manages GuideOne's applications in the cloud.

THE BENEFITS
- Staff growth cost avoidance and a 50% reduction of the data center footprint.
- The new environment—configured, deployed and tested by Sirius in less than 60 days with no disruptions—will help GuideOne realize future cost savings and modernization via Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud products.
- GuideOne's internal resources, already familiar with VMware®, now have time to develop their AWS skills.

"When developing our migration strategy to the cloud, we knew one of the largest disruption risks was extended periods of latency during the migration. Therefore, we selected a partner who understood how our application workloads combined together, shortening the time they would be separated and executing with precision – all critical factors for success. We were looking for a partner that understood us, our unique challenges, and could also augment our existing knowledge. Sirius checked all of those boxes and helped us complete the project. A lot of companies talk about being partners; Sirius puts it into action and we are so pleased with the final result."

Shane Maas
Infrastructure Director
GuideOne Insurance

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THE JOURNEY TO THE CLOUD

When GuideOne set out to migrate on-premises workloads to a co-location facility in 2019, they realized that a cloud solution would provide better performance and lower costs if they could overcome challenges such as a lack of internal skills, application portability and compatibility while ensuring consistency for governance, security and operational policies. When GuideOne engaged Sirius, it was clear they needed SLA consistency, and to bridge the gap between their application development team's requirements and their infrastructure team's ability to deliver.

Sirius began with implementation planning that included a detailed review of GuideOne's existing environment and a roadmap to a future state that specified the appropriate compute to right-size their new cloud-based ecosystem. "Sirius did a good job of listening to us," Maas said. "They met us at our maturity level and gave us a plan to get out of the data center business."

GuideOne's existing VMware skills were among the top considerations in selecting VMware Cloud on AWS. The solution runs on Amazon EC2 elastic, bare-metal infrastructure and includes connectivity and storage. A Commvault™ backup solution in the cloud replaced an existing backup solution to improve recovery time objectives (RTOs) and recovery point objectives (RPOs). The new cloud-based environment was a success as it provided full operational consistency with GuideOne's former on-premises deployments.

As part of this work, Sirius implemented and integrated many components to the VMware Cloud on AWS environment, including vRealize Log Insight, VMware HCX Manager, VMware vCenter Server®, and VMware Hybrid Linked Mode. Sirius worked with GuideOne to ensure consistency between on-premises and cloud solutions for governance, security and operational policies as well as application portability and compatibility. Another highlight of the solution was the seamless, large-scale workload portability and hybrid operations required to support GuideOne's business and set the stage for rapid cloud deployment and migration.

The solution allows GuideOne to quickly consume cloud, gives internal resources familiar with VMware time to ramp up their AWS skills, and delivers a tested and vastly improved disaster recovery (DR) strategy. "While this was a cost-avoidance exercise to flatten expenses, we also gained the benefit of a VMware/AWS environment," Maas said.

THE RESULTS
- The work included completing the connectivity prerequisites for VMware Cloud on AWS and AWS Direct Connect redundancy.
- Sirius migrated development testing, quality assurance and user acceptance testing (core services or PROD environments) within 60 days for approximately 850 virtual machines in 15 migration waves.
- Sirius provided migration planning for over 35 workloads, which includes the migration as well as the data center evacuation.

ABOUT SIRIUS

Sirius provides enterprise-class cloud services to organizations throughout North America. Our highly skilled, certified cloud experts provide a practical, agnostic approach and proven methodologies to help clients achieve their cloud goals. Call Sirius today at 800-460-1237 to schedule a discussion of your needs, and to learn how Sirius can help you manage your operations, optimize your IT, secure it all, and transform your business.

SOLUTION COMPONENTS
- 19 VMware ESXi™ servers in one availability zone on VMware Cloud on AWS, an integrated cloud offering for seamlessly migrating and extending on-premises VMware vSphere®-based environments to the AWS Cloud running on bare metal infrastructure.
- NetApp® Cloud Volumes ONTAP®, an enterprise multiprotocol storage option leveraged on-premises that allows replicating on-premises data with AWS.
- Commvault Complete™ Backup & Recovery
- AWS Direct Connect and a VPN provides connectivity to the existing data center.
- VMware Hybrid Cloud Extension (HCX) to meet the migration requirements of minimal disruption and downtime for the various applications in the environment.
- Sirius migration services methodologies.
- Sirius reviewed the security model and standards and provided a comprehensive security framework including posture, policies and sign-off.
- Sirius provided future-state network security design, deployment and configuration of Palo Alto Networks® and F5® load balancer.