

Case Study

Managed Services



Client:

Ascend Learning

Ascend Learning is a leading provider of technology-based educational, curriculum and assessment solutions for healthcare and other vocational industries. A 1000+ employee company headquartered in Burlington, MA and Kansas City, MO, with additional offices in Arizona, Minnesota, and California. Ascend is comprised of 8 different companies located across the country serving secondary, post-secondary and professional education markets in nursing, allied health, emergency services, insurance and finance industries, fitness and many other health science professions.

Challenge	CBTS Solution	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ascend needed a new data center hosting provider for between 600-800 virtual and physical servers (combined), 100TB of storage, and two redundant, active-active sites for several critical applications. Needed monitoring of infrastructure at remote locations and URLs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBTS provided design, build and run services. Monitoring and management services for the client's IT environment. A backup solution that protects over 140 TBs of data. Business Unit specific failover capability. Capacity planning, trend forecasting and server environment health checks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial cost savings achieved through consolidation and economies of scale. A simplified, logical and well thought out environment to support the business. Reduced incident resolution times due to our integration and ownership. Reduced need to maintain internal expertise across multiple technologies .

Cloud, covered.

Business Challenge

The company grew through acquisition, which led to disparate systems in various locations. In September 2012, Ascend issued an RFP to select a new solution for data center hosting and consolidation.

As stated in the RFP, Ascend Learning plans to select a new data center hosting provider for between 600-800 virtual and physical servers (combined), 100TB of storage, and two redundant, active-active sites for several critical applications.

After the Data Center project was completed, Ascend came to CBTS for monitoring of infrastructure at remote locations and URLs.

CBTS Solution

CBTS After considerable review of options and costs, Ascend Learning chose a CapEx model for their data center consolidation project. CBTS' experience and expertise was particularly valuable to Ascend's team as their staff had not undertaken a project of this size or scope. Upon completion of the Design, Build, Run project, CBTS is contracted to manage Ascend's steady state environment including:

- Monitoring and managing almost 1,200 devices (in CBTS partner data centers and on customer premises).
- Monitoring over 250 business critical URLs.
- Managing almost 600 TB of storage on 4 SANs.
- Deploying a backup solution that protects over 140 TBs of data utilizing only 50TB to do so.
- Fully integrated Change and Incident Management processes between organizations.
- Patch management and installation for both Linux and Windows environments.
- Business Unit specific failover capability.
- Capacity planning, trend forecasting and server environment health checks.

Services Used

The client now has a fully scalable, on-demand, and cost-effective storage infrastructure, with the following benefits:

- Eliminates spending capital on day one for all future storage needs, freeing up financial resources for other critical business initiatives.
- Storage deployed as needed on a per GB monthly utility basis, adding agility and cost-effectiveness to the business operation.
- Storage turned off when the demand goes down, saving on storage cost, rack/power/floor space.
- Allows internal IT to focus on more mission-critical projects.

Cloud, covered.

Engineers/Consultants deployed on the project

CBTS provided a few lead engineers including:

- A Service Delivery Manager
- A Project Manager
- A Virtualization Engineer II
- A Senior Network Engineer
- A Windows Systems Engineer III
- A Monitoring Expert

Results

Ascend is experiencing an “all time” company record in up-time since the transition. In addition, other notable results include:

- Substantial cost savings achieved through consolidation and economies of scale.
- A simplified, logical and well thought out environment to support the business.
- Reduced incident resolution times due to our integration and ownership.
- Increased scope and reduced timeline of project due to efficiencies gained through partnership.
- Centralized patching and server management across Ascend Learning's individual Business Units.
- Reduced need to maintain internal expertise across multiple technologies due to partnership.
- Integrated team approach between the companies promoting a “sounding board” approach to problems, solutions and project launches.