Global Microbiology Lab Accelerates Innovation and Improves Compliance with Nutanix

About IHMA

Industry: Pharmaceuticals
Geo: Schaumburg, IL
Website: www.ihma.com
Key Benefits:

- Responsive consultants, knowledgeable in migration services, empower a smaller IT team

- Robust security strengthens protection of healthcare data and compliance

- Hyperconverged infrastructure accelerates performance

Applications

- Microsoft SQL Servers

Products:
- AHV Virtualization

- Nutanix Cloud Infrastructure (NCI)

- Nutanix Cloud Manager (NCM)

- Nutanix Move

Ready to get Hands-On?

Take a Test Drive

IHMA relies on Nutanix solutions and Professional Services to migrate massive amounts of lab data, quickly and efficiently.

Overview

As a leader in the clinical microbiology laboratory industry, IHMA has supported pharmaceutical and biotech companies in the discovery, development and launch of hundreds of antimicrobial agents. The company applies its rich expertise to all phases of development, including new antimicrobial screening, clinical development, regulatory approval, and commercialization. When the company began to experience issues supporting its existing traditional virtualized infrastructure environment, IHMA migrated to Nutanix Cloud Platform. The new solution is more cost-effective, simpler to deploy and manage, and is fully backed by a knowledgeable, experienced Nutanix Professional Services team.

> **Our IT team members play many roles, and Nutanix enables us to run lean, knowing we can get the help we need, when we need it. The migration expertise that our Nutanix consultant demonstrated onsite has been amazing, and I would recommend Nutanix Professional Services without a doubt.**
>
> **Joseph Finlay,**
> Director of Information Technology Operations, IHMA

Challenges

Supporting more than 1,500 healthcare institutions in more than 80 countries, IHMA works closely with clinical sites to drive clinical development and commercialization of anti-infective agents. The database infrastructure is essential to processing and analyzing massive amounts of data generated by the organization's microbiology laboratory.

"Our primary product is data, and so there is a significant SQL server load that runs in our environment," said Joseph Finlay, Director of Information Technology Operations at IHMA. "In addition to the SQL server work, everything we have is virtual first. This is really the fabric of the IHMA technology environment."

Because IHMA operates in the biotech industry and continually collaborates with other healthcare organizations, the company's IT team keeps its environment secure, compliant, and agile.

"Our IT group maintains all aspects of technology," said Finlay. "When we do business with large pharmaceutical companies, they expect us to have the same scrutiny and stringent security practices that they do, which requires us to implement additional infrastructure and services, including cloud and identity management services."

Technical support is key to helping the lean IT team manage these challenges. When IHMA's previous Virtualization vendor experienced some organizational changes, IHMA explored other alternatives to find a more cost-effective, responsive solution.

"In the fall of 2023, we were already having issues getting support, we became concerned that if something breaks as a small business, we would not get the attention we needed in order to be successful repairing the environment or addressing issues. When it was time to renew our licenses, and the cost had gone up four times compared to the previous year, we decided to choose a solution that would deliver the value we needed to move forward."

Solutions

Finlay had considered Nutanix solutions in the past, and its strong reputation in technical support made the company an obvious choice for IHMA's infrastructure upgrade.

"Over the years, we had heard about the great support at Nutanix," said Finlay. "We got the reassurance and confidence from the Nutanix sales team that we needed, so we decided to move forward with a future platform."

IHMA migrated to the Nutanix Cloud Platform, featuring hyperconverged compute, storage, virtualization, and networking at the core.

"We deployed a three-node Nutanix cluster utilizing Nutanix Cloud Platform," said Finlay. "We implemented AOS Storage, then shifted all of our VMs from our VMware environment over to Nutanix and AHV Virtualization."

Finlay and his team were working under a very aggressive deadline, but the Nutanix Professional Services team demonstrated its value from day one.

"The real challenge was around timing and the amount of IT staff we had to execute the transitions to Nutanix," said Finlay. "We had only about two and a half weeks to fully pivot from VMware to Nutanix before the product stopped working due licensing constraints. That's where the Nutanix Professional Services team really stepped up. They helped us migrate to a brand new, unfamiliar environment, and get it up and running in a production capacity, while resolving any issues that arose."

The Nutanix Move tool simplified the migration process, enabling Finlay and his team to migrate their VMs with minimal downtime.

"I was skeptical about Move at first," said Finlay. "I did the test drive on the Nutanix website, and said to myself that there was no way the process would be that easy. But Move enabled us to quickly migrate 99 VMs to the new platform, with only one issue—and that was due to a Windows OS driver problem."

Customer Outcome

The Nutanix Professional Services team was instrumental in enabling IHMA to speed up deployment of its solution, while saving Finlay extra time and effort.

"When our Nutanix consultant arrived onsite, we already had some of the components racked, powered, and cabled, but I had provisioned it as I would have in our previous environment," said Finlay. "Our consultant was familiar with both solutions and helped us deploy the

solution using a Nutanix methodology. Nutanix in many cases is much simpler to set up and configure out of the box. My old way of doing things might have delayed our deployment. We went from a state of panic to realizing we were a week ahead of schedule."

The solid technical support continued when deployment was complete, and IHMA looks to Nutanix to help maintain the business agility his team needs to keep pace with its clients' changing demands.

"As we pivot between these IT roles, we need to be able to call out, get somebody live on the line, and have confidence that it's going to get handled and treated well," said Finlay. "And I didn't have that previously, but at Nutanix I do."

The new, state-of-the-art solution is also providing great performance, helping IHMA meet escalating demands and manage larger workloads.

"I was skeptical that we'd have enough resources in our nodes, and the Nutanix team reassured me that it wasn't going to be an issue—and it hasn't been," said Finlay. "After moving to Nutanix, I saw a 20% decrease in the wait times on my SQL servers due to the increased CPU, memory, plus the storage performance that came with having the hyperconverged, totally solid-state platform for storage."

The solution also supports the security that the organization needs to meet its compliance obligations and protect the privacy of healthcare information.

"Although we're a mid-sized company, we support many large pharmaceutical companies, and we have to meet certain NIST standards," said Finlay. "We don't have HIPAA data, but when our data is combined with data from other laboratories and our clients, it becomes very sensitive. We have to treat it with the same level of scrutiny as HIPAA and encrypt data at rest. Knowing that Nutanix has a presence in other environments that are highly sensitive, was a huge selling point for the platform."

IHMA leadership has closely followed the progress of the migration effort and has been pleased with the return on investment that Nutanix delivers.

"It was really transformational having this level of technical support and Professional Services, which reaffirmed for the executive team that we made the right decision," said Finlay. "They saw that support we got from Nutanix when we were in need, and that helped us justify our expenses."

Next Steps

With its Nutanix platform in place, IHMA is looking at ways to extend its solution to advance its cloud strategy.

Together with Nutanix, IHMA is poised to continue to extend its leadership in drug development, backed by an unbeatable combination of advanced technology and responsive support.

Learn more at www.nutanix.com

Partner/Customer

IHMA is a premier provider of antimicrobial drug development studies. With laboratories in both the US and Europe, the company partners with clients around the world in the biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and diagnostic industries. IHMA is a leading, independent laboratory specializing in surveillance studies and clinical trials, which are key milestones along the continuum from drug development to commercialization.