



“By moving to a cloud computing model, University of Colorado Foundation gained proactive managing and monitoring of our infrastructure, freeing our limited IT resources to focus on projects that add value at a strategic business level.”

- Curtis Helsel, VP of Information Services, University of Colorado Foundation

Major Benefits:

- Accelerated project delivery (completed in 90 days)
- Achieved between 19.5% and 23.4% savings per year for the first three years
- Access to subject matter experts on demand vs. staffing in house
- 24 x 7 helpdesk support
- 24 x 7 server and network management and monitoring
- Significant failover recovery and availability improvements
- Online, real time IT key performance indicators (KPIs) delivered by a web dashboard

Executive Summary

As the University of Colorado’s fundraising partner, the University of Colorado Foundation is focused on developing the resources vitally needed to sustain excellence at the university. Because it is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the Foundation continually seeks ways to maximize the impact of donor contributions for the benefit of the University of Colorado. This means actively finding ways to reduce the overhead costs of operating the Foundation.

Over the last five years, Curtis Helsel, the University of Colorado Foundation’s VP of Information Services, has been able to reduce his IT budget by 60%. Helsel achieved this through a two-pronged approach. The Foundation realized immediate savings by outsourcing infrastructure management to CenterBeam, which allowed internal IT staff to focus on process reengineering projects to further drive the Foundation’s business efficiency and cost savings. As a result, the savings realized in IT allowed the Foundation to invest and grow the fundraising team by approximately 16 full time employees.

Challenge: Doing More with Less

The University of Colorado Foundation’s goal was to spend less money and time on activities that weren’t core to their mission, and in fact, might be distracting from it. Because Helsel knew the total cost of IT ownership was high for server management, maintenance and user helpdesk support, he prioritized reducing costs in these areas.

A Balancing Act

Helsel needed to meet the strategic business requirements as well as support the evolving needs of the University of Colorado Foundation’s end user community, who were integrating new technology into their daily work processes (i.e. remote and mobile workers on PDAs such as BlackBerry® and GoodLink®).

Organizationally, a challenge was issued to be more efficient and provide higher service levels to end users.

Helsel needed to find a solution to yield significant savings in a way that did not compromise a vital requirement – keeping the University of Colorado Foundation’s IT environment robust and secure. Helsel had a vision to evolve to a platform that incorporated industry best practices for security, protecting their most precious IT asset, their donor database, and making sure technology issues didn’t get in the way of the Foundation’s development team bringing in new donor contributions.

Organizational Objectives:

- Reduce IT operational costs
- Deliver high levels of service and support to users
- Support a highly distributed, mobile work force
- Minimize security risks
- Focus IT resources on applications that enhance fundraising efforts

Solution: Embracing a New Approach

Helsel was thinking of IT differently. He wanted a holistic solution that would simplify and streamline the University of Colorado Foundation's infrastructure, while adding proactive management and monitoring capabilities. He had a vision of "offloading" the hassles of day to day infrastructure maintenance and helpdesk support, so the Foundation's IT team would be available to focus on applications that directly contribute to organizational objectives.

Without having to worry about the day to day helpdesk and desktop management and firefighting, Helsel and his internal IT team would be able to focus on the deployment of key projects such as an integrated document management system, a complete migration of the CRM software to a web-based version, and address a number of Enterprise Risk Management issues.

In order to deliver strategic benefits to the University of Colorado Foundation, Helsel decided to take a calculated risk and find a partner to deliver on-demand, pre-built services via the cloud, or Internet. Helsel was confident a remotely managed cloud solution was the way to go to achieve his vision.

Finding the Right Partner

Helsel chose to partner with CenterBeam to serve as an extension of the University of Colorado Foundation's IT operations. In addition to meeting the Foundation's organizational objectives, CenterBeam has expertise in handling the unique challenges associated with nonprofits working with high value donors and data. Helsel also knew he needed to get away from the "stair-step" staffing model. In this model, the Foundation was forced to hire blocks of IT capacity at a time.

Helsel explains the issue with the old staffing model this way: "If the Foundation helpdesk was staffed to handle 250 calls per month, then service levels suffered at a volume of 300 per month. At 200 calls per month, the Foundation was paying for unused resources. I struggled with the timing of adding an additional system administrator. How many servers can one system administrator manage, and how many servers should you have before adding that second position?"

By moving services to the cloud, the University of Colorado Foundation was able to provide high level support to all users, everywhere, anytime.

CenterBeam hosts a comprehensive suite of IT services over the Internet using a cloud computing model, so the University of Colorado Foundation was able to subscribe to just those services it needed, when it needed them. Moving to the cloud made it easy for the Foundation to maintain a consistent level of support for all users as well as increase capacity or add capabilities on demand without investing in new infrastructure, training new personnel, or software licensing.

Minimal Risk

For Helsel, CenterBeam's model presented an attractive alternative to traditional outsourcing options. Most importantly, there was an inherent goal alignment which set both he and CenterBeam up for success. CenterBeam's monthly fee-based service provides a strong incentive for it to resolve issues quickly and completely so they don't recur. This leads to a satisfied and productive end user community, and internal IT resources that are able to focus on fundraising activities versus infrastructure hassles. Other key differentiators simplified the decision to partner with CenterBeam, including:

- Short term contract with an easy out
- Single source solution – one integrated solution removes finger pointing when issues occur
- Fixed monthly fees with unlimited helpdesk calls
- Longstanding partnerships with industry thought leaders
- 24x7 helpdesk answered by desktop engineers, not a dispatch service
- Online, real time, IT key performance indicators (KPIs) delivered by a web dashboard
- Access to a pool of subject matter experts vs. relying on one individual contributor
- Scalable on a monthly basis to align with the University of Colorado Foundation's staff levels
- External audits and validation: SAS 70, Type II certification

From the get-go, the University of Colorado Foundation benefited from the flexibility and cost predictability cloud computing offered. CenterBeam's pricing model is based on "consumption" of IT services, or pay as you go. By building one secure shared infrastructure, CenterBeam offered the Foundation enterprise class technology at a fraction of the cost it would take for their IT staff to provision in-house.

For a flat monthly fee, CenterBeam provided:

- Microsoft® licensing
- Server monitoring and management: security patching and updates, antivirus protection, nightly backups, software distribution, asset tracking and Active Directory management
- On-demand IT reporting (network, PC, server, helpdesk tracking and end user satisfaction) and predictive analysis
- Network device monitoring and management
- Enterprise-class PC security
- Desktop management: nightly PC backups, operating system and software updates, software distribution, asset tracking and user administration
- 24 x 7 x 365 helpdesk
- VPN management

Experts Available Throughout Transition

Through CenterBeam's technical expertise and partnership with the University of Colorado Foundation's IT team, the Foundation was able to significantly accelerate their IT infrastructure optimization process. This further reduced the Foundation's IT operations and support costs.

To ensure a smooth transition, CenterBeam had a Senior Level Engineer onsite and available to help manage the process. Early on, this included meeting with Helsel and the Foundation's IT Team and performing data collection. Thereafter, this meant conducting touch point sessions, design reviews, knowledge sharing, and help addressing any open issues.

This level of professional services was offered to the Colorado University Foundation not only to build Helsel's confidence level, but to offer guidance every step of the way and to make sure the Foundation had access to CenterBeam expertise. This also ensured there were no gaps in responding to Helsel's concerns.

The University of Colorado Foundation's business operations were not impacted during cutover. Due to the magnitude of the project and number of servers, the transition happened in a phased approach. Application testing took place prior to each cutover to ensure no detail was missed and all glitches were discovered prior to that phase going live. The entire project was on budget, on schedule, and exceeded the Foundation's cost savings targets.

Major Benefits

CenterBeam has maintained the University of Colorado Foundation's infrastructure for over 5 years with continuous improvement built into the flat monthly fee. This has improved the Foundation's user experience and service offering, while providing ongoing financial and operational benefits.

CenterBeam's feedback loops provide regular touchpoints to ensure high levels of customer satisfaction. The first point of satisfaction measurement is a web-based survey, provided after every closed helpdesk case. Weekly meetings with an account representative, as well as regular high level executive meetings throughout the year, make sure CenterBeam stays in step with their customers' evolving organizational needs.

Since partnering with CenterBeam, the University of Colorado Foundation has been able to:

1. Enjoy an upgraded infrastructure without any CAPEX

- Migrated from Exchange 5.5 to 2003 to 2007
- Upgraded spam filter three times to stay abreast with evolving technology
- Upgraded the remote control tool three times to enhance security and reliability with each upgrade
- Enterprise mashup for dynamic reporting upgraded twice yearly for deeper visibility into the University of Colorado Foundation's infrastructure with user friendly navigation
- Upgraded BlackBerry®
- Coming soon: the Foundation will upgrade all users to Microsoft® Office 2007

2. Access on-demand expertise

- Pull in experts only when needed versus staffing for niche capabilities
- When a project needs dedicated resources, CenterBeam delivers Professional Services at a 25% discount, with staff that is knowledgeable about the Foundation's environment and network, minimizing risk and ramp time

3. Secure and Optimize Infrastructure

4. Outsource commodity aspects (helpdesk, server monitoring / maintenance)

- CenterBeam is able to negotiate and deliver "volume" pricing levels that could not be achieved by a smaller organization such as the University of Colorado Foundation
- CenterBeam eliminates the purchasing cost barrier for premier infrastructure management tools, as well as the associated staffing costs to run/monitor the tools

SAS 70, Type II Certification

CenterBeam provides valuable expertise from CISSP professionals whose sole focus is to provide state-of-the-art IT management and the most current security practices to protect the University of Colorado Foundation's infrastructure against evolving threats. CenterBeam's services, processes and policies are SAS 70 Type II certified. The company is inspected annually to ensure the highest levels of security, stability and reliability for its clients. The result is expert protection against outside threats, assurance of operational integrity and an in-house IT staff that is free to devote time and expertise to the core functions critical to the success of its business.

Intel® Certified – Powered by SpikeSource®

CenterBeam has earned four certifications from the Intel® Certified Solutions Program for its server management and monitoring, network management, desktop and helpdesk services. This validation process assures applications run on the CenterBeam platform have passed Intel's required testing and standards for security, interoperability and maintainability.

Summary

By partnering with CenterBeam, the University of Colorado Foundation was able to reap the benefits of having its IT services delivered via a cloud computing environment. Helsel achieved his vision of significantly reducing IT costs (while delivering improved support and security to end users), and utilizing his internal IT resources to support the Foundation's fundraising efforts. According to Helsel, in the first three years, the Foundation lowered its IT spending between 19.5% and 23.4% per year—with the savings reinvested into growing the fundraising team.

Contact CenterBeam

If you are considering whether outsourcing to a managed service provider is right for your business, let's talk. With just a few data points from you, we can determine if your organization can benefit from the resulting infrastructure optimization and what the scope and savings might look like. Visit us online at www.centerbeam.com.

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