

CASE STUDY

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Presidio Helps Jacobson Companies Consolidate Multiple Data Centers



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- Craig Girsch,
Director of IT Infrastructure,
Jacobson Companies

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Client:
Jacobson Companies

Business:
Third-party logistics company offering end-to-end global supply chain management solutions worldwide.

Challenge:
Jacobson needed to consolidate seven data centers attained through merger and acquisition down to two in order to achieve better ROI and reduce their overall IT spending.

Outcome:
After a competitive process vetting multiple vendors, Presidio was chosen to conduct a design and planning session, enabling them to finalize the detailed design specifics, requirements and implementation plan for the data center consolidation, partnering with EMC. Additionally, Presidio provided the expertise to implement and configure the Cisco networking components for LAN, WAN, UCS and firewalls.

Since Jacobson Companies opened its doors in 1968, it has grown from a modest eight-story building in Des Moines, Iowa into a logistics company that includes more than 35 million square feet of warehouse space in 35 states. Over the past decade, through a number of mergers, acquisitions and partnerships with high quality companies, Jacobson found itself with seven data centers in multiple states. Knowing that maintaining fewer data centers would save them both capital and operational expenses, Jacobson requested proposals from several vendors specializing in data center consolidation.

Although there was heavy competition from other industry providers, Presidio Networked Solutions was ultimately chosen for its expertise, relationships with leading technology partners, pricing and risk mitigation approach.

Until recently, Jacobson’s various acquisitions had resulted in an environment with disparate applications, networks, equipment and culture, and there were complications managing a rapidly growing environment. After Jacobson engaged Presidio for design, implementation and delivery, Presidio

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made sure to see the data center consolidation through to the end. “We found Presidio’s experience in other data center migrations to be a distinct advantage,” says Craig Girsch, Director of IT Infrastructure at Jacobson.

Risk Mitigation Key to Data Center Consolidation

Specifically, Jacobson needed to collapse seven data centers into two while maintaining a 24 x 7 operation. This was accomplished through the use of EMC backup technology and storage, VMware for virtualization and server consolidation, and Cisco WAN, security and unified computing technology.

Presidio’s planning and risk-management precautions prior to consolidation led to an easy transition for Jacobson. “There were several months of planning that led up to the actual physical migration. This included contingency plans, roll-back plans and testing of critical systems in a mock failed state,” explains Girsch.

For example, the contingency plans Presidio developed in partnership with EMC allowed Jacobson to avert delays when a broken lift gate on a truck driven by the physical transport company stalled the physical delivery of equipment to the target data center in Pennsylvania. According to Girsch, “Even with an event as obscure sounding as the ‘lift gate was broken on the truck,’ the extra planning undertaken by Presidio allowed us to stay on schedule.”

Presidio’s Approach to Data Center Consolidation

Presidio collects data in all technology areas, correlates the findings, prepares recommendations and presents them in an in-depth review with the customer. “Presidio’s approach was meticulous and was the key to the success of the consolidation effort,” says Girsch. “They met with the key stakeholders to better understand our business objectives and goals and spent time analyzing Jacobson’s data centers, requirements and applications.”

The end result is that Jacobson now has two consolidated data centers: for high availability and disaster recovery purposes, one in Pennsylvania and the other in Iowa. “You cannot over-plan data center consolidations,” says Girsch, “You have to be willing to think outside the box when it comes to mitigating risk, contingency planning, and timelines and you have to be fully invested in the project. Presidio checked every one of these boxes and then some.”

The success of the data center consolidation project allowed Jacobson to accelerate the provisioning of new servers and applications. “At the end of the day,” concludes Girsch. “I’m proud to say that Presidio helped us put together an architecture we can build upon.”

For more information on Presidio Integrated IT Solutions, contact us at the location nearest you.

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