



NAVISITE GROWS MANAGED CLOUD BUSINESS WITH VMWARE vCLOUD DIRECTOR



INDUSTRY

IT INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

LOCATION

ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS

KEY CHALLENGES

- Provide customers with API access to Navisite's IaaS platform
- Reduce network complexity and accelerate provisioning with software-defined networking capabilities
- Integrate more self-service capabilities into Proximity client interface

SOLUTION

Navisite used vCloud Director's extensive APIs to integrate its cloud management functionality into their cloud platform and their proprietary Proximity client interface. Navisite also deployed VMware NSX® in a vCloud® Networking and Security™ compatibility mode, enabling software-defined networking capabilities for internal teams and customers alike.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Saved approximately \$3 Million over custom development costs
- Reduced provisioning time to minutes and cut support in half
- Spent less time on security by using out-of-the-box capabilities

Navisite, one of the world's largest IT service providers, needed to find a way to meet customer requests for API access to the company's Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) platform. The company also wanted to simplify the networking of their cloud platform, accelerate provisioning, and offer more self-service capabilities to customers, including enhanced networking and security. Navisite deployed VMware vCloud Director® cloud management platform and integrated its capabilities into Navisite's own single-pane-of-glass client interface: Proximity. Navisite saved \$3 Million in development costs, reduced provisioning time to minutes, and cut platform management support by 50 percent.

Founded in 1996, Navisite is a leading worldwide provider of enterprise-class managed cloud and managed hosting services. Navisite's broad portfolio of managed services are used by enterprises looking to outsource IT infrastructure, management and reduce their capital and operational costs. Enterprise customers choose and depend on Navisite for tailored solutions, delivered through a global footprint of state-of-the-art data centers.

The Challenge

Navisite, a member of the VMware vCloud® Air™ Network since 2007, is one of the largest cloud service providers today. Time Warner Cable acquired Navisite in 2011, and then, in May 2016, Time Warner Cable merged with Charter Communications. Navisite is now part of Spectrum Enterprise, a division of Charter Communications.

In 2010 Navisite launched its first cloud, a multi-tenant VMware-based IaaS with managed services added to the platform. "At the time," explains David Grimes, CTO at Navisite, "vCloud Director didn't exist, so we launched with VMware vSphere® 4.0 and built on top of that an enterprise platform designed to be used by an advanced IT operations team."

Three years ago Grimes and his team were looking at what to focus on next. One opportunity that stood out was increasing customer requests for APIs. "Clients were coming to us with real-world use cases and real desire to have API access to our IaaS platform," says Grimes. These customers were already using IaaS and needed API support to connect billing data, automate development environments, or otherwise increase efficiencies and reduce costs.

“With vCloud Director we cut provisioning time from one or two days to a matter of minutes, because the platform is API-enabled and fully automated, and we can manage the environment with roughly half the resources.”

DAVID GRIMES
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER
NAVISITE

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware vCloud Director
- VMware NSX
- VMware vSphere®

PLATFORM

- VMware vCloud Director cloud management platform

According to Grimes, Navisite's cloud platform also needed more automation, faster provisioning, and enhanced security services to meet the demands of its enlarged, post-merger customer base, and these capabilities needed to be integrated into the company's single-pane-of-glass Proximity customer interface. Grimes was also looking to enable software-defined networking (SDN) capabilities in order to expand features, reduce costs, provisioning times, and complexity related to network configurations.

The Solution

Grimes knew he needed a major upgrade to Navisite's cloud platform to meet these needs, and he saw three options: “We could map the vCloud Director API, or other APIs, to our existing vSphere platform; build our own completely new platform; or pivot to vCloud Director and get a prebuilt platform with a strong ecosystem.” Grimes' team deemed the first option as too difficult in consideration of available technology, and the second option, building a new platform, as possible, but with limited potential without an established ecosystem to leverage.

Grimes had been tracking the progress of vCloud Director, and he felt that version 5.1, released in 2012, had robust and mature API and SDN capabilities that could reliably be deployed and meet the needs of his customers. Grimes explains, “The software-defined networking model available in vCloud Director 5.1 was compelling enough for us to embrace the vCloud Director platform,” because of the SDN's ability to reduce physical network complexity and hardware requirements, improve security, and to accelerate network provisioning. An additional factor was VMware's engineering strength and commitment to the platform. “We believed VMware would deliver quality features at a rate that would surpass our own,” says Grimes.

Navisite launched its vCloud Director solution in 2013 with version 5.1, and they are running version 8.10 today with plans to adopt 8.20 shortly after its release. Navisite used vCloud Director's extensive APIs and integrated its capabilities into Proximity, the company's primary client interface. Proximity makes all key services and information readily accessible to Navisite customers. Adding vCloud Director capabilities into Proximity helped Navisite achieve its strategic objective of providing customers with an all-encompassing, powerful, differentiated portal experience.

Navisite also provides customers with native access to the vCloud Director APIs, giving Navisite the ability to meet customer requests for a range of API implementations and to expand the scope and depth of its offerings. Additionally, Navisite has deployed VMware NSX network virtualization in a VMware vCloud Networking and Security™ compatibility mode with vCloud Director, enabling a range of software-defined networking capabilities, including critical security services.

Business Results & Benefits

Grimes says the vCloud Director solution has been transformative to Navisite because it has provided the API access and SDN capabilities the company needed while allowing his team to focus on enhancing their platform and optimizing their customer experience. As a result, Navisite:

Saved Approximately \$3 Million

Grimes believes it would have been hard to build the software-defined networking

capabilities into a homegrown system. He estimates it would take a team 9 to 12 months of work building on top of their existing technologies at a cost of approximately \$3 Million. The company used those resources, instead, to enhance their Proximity portal to provide an integrated experience between their cloud platform and their managed service offerings.

“By getting the core IaaS technologies out of the box with vCloud Director, we could focus on enhancing the services in our Proximity interface solution,” Grimes said. These enhancements included backup and recovery, replication, anti-virus, monitoring, simplification of network features, OS configuration and patching—the services that go above core IaaS capabilities and set Navisite apart.

Reduced Provisioning Time and Support Needs

The complexity of a physical tenant network in the cloud implementation was dramatically reduced by moving to software-defined networking with vCloud Director. In addition, “with vCloud Director we cut provisioning time from one or two days to a matter of minutes, because the platform is API-enabled and fully automated,” explained Grimes, “and we can manage the environment with roughly half the resources.”

Spent Less Time on Basic Security

Security is a top priority for Grimes and his customers, and Grimes sees vCloud Director as a strong security enabler. “The software-defined networking and the architecture of vCloud Director provide many security best practices right out-of-the-box.” This allowed Grimes’ team to spend less time managing basic security configurations and more time focused on delivering core managed services.

Looking Ahead

Grimes is looking forward to the upcoming vCloud Director 8.20, which will natively integrate NSX into the vCloud Director platform. Navisite is working on integrating more NSX functionality into their cloud platform and Proximity interface, which will allow customers to use advanced network features with the ease of self-service cloud delivery.

Grimes is committed to Navisite’s VMware relationship. “Our partnership with VMware is strong. We engage early and often. We see VMware accelerating their pace of innovation, and we aim to match it.”

