

## CASE STUDY

### **MULTI-LOCATION ACCOUNTING FIRM ELIMINATES IT MANAGEMENT COMPLEXITY AND ENABLES AGGRESSIVE GROWTH**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

An accounting firm was experiencing aggressive growth as their geography expanded over multiple locations. In the midst of the expansion, their IT team of one was struggling to juggle mission-critical technology initiatives across a myriad of environments. Complexity was multiplying, and the risk of downtime loomed large. DataBank simplified operations with a combination of private cloud, terminal server clusters, storage and security, allowing the customer to scale IT without adding any headcount.

#### **Growing Accounting Firm Struggles with Complexities of Multiple Geographies and the Risk of Downtime**

An accounting firm spread across multiple geographies was growing quickly, and as the practice continued to expand, their IT team was onboarding more locations. While the growth was a positive for the business, the IT team was made up of one IT manager, and managing disparate offices on top of daily responsibilities was becoming a burden.

“With each new location they’d acquire or stand up, there was another office location to integrate,” Justin Sevier, Director of Hosting Solutions at DataBank recalled.

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**JUSTIN SEVIER,**

Director of Hosting Solutions at DataBank

Growth was sure to continue, and the day-to-day responsibilities were becoming overwhelming for one person, yet it didn’t quite seem to make sense to hire additional IT personnel. “Rather than continuing to go down that path with local workstations and end users to manage, the customer came to DataBank and asked us how we could solve this problem at scale.”

#### **Consolidating Disparate IT Environments, Achieving Consistency, and Refocusing Technology Expertise**

With multiple remote locations to stay on top of, inconsistent configurations had developed over time, increasing the management burden.

“The real need was to be able to condense these environments into a single location that all end users would be able to connect to,” Sevier said. “We wanted the customer to have a standard template for every server. This way, they’d only have to manage one template while DataBank oversees basic care and feeding. Using terminal servers, the IT manager would be able to go ahead and onboard locations, while we’d oversee basic care and feeding.”

Device repair was becoming a headache, too. Managing remote locations with a full staff who need access to printers can become time consuming, especially when the onus is on the IT manager to address issues. Enabling all staff members to be able to use a printer and ensure the right drivers were in place was also a challenge.

“These kinds of issues are where templates make life much easier. We planned to add a template to active directory so all users have access. Our customer wouldn’t have configuration issues with respect to fixed devices anymore,” Sevier explained.

Finally, the risk of downtime loomed. With many accountants outsourced, it was stressful to keep track of accounting software running locally in each office. If a central office went down, it would impact everyone’s ability to get their work done. The new plan was to run the accounting software centrally in a DataBank data center, eliminating risk and offloading the management of uptime.

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## Resolving Complexity Introduced by Numerous Environments and End User Workstation Management

After identifying the primary needs of the firm, the DataBank team set out to resolve the complexity of managing IT in multiple locations, as well as the complications introduced by end user workstation management. A terminal server cluster was the go-to solution for consolidation and reducing complexity

The implementation team started by engineering a private cloud especially designed with more lanes and infrastructure than necessary to address resiliency concerns. If a blade were to go down, all of the accounting firm’s core services would continue to run without issues. “We layered on third-party vulnerability scanning, as well as multi-factor authentication for security,” Sevier said.

Next, the provisioning team worked to spin up base infrastructure, build the private cloud and network, and get the firewalls in place. The customer provided the DataBank team with the software that would need installing, some of which was very specific to the

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accounting industry. “The IT manager chose to install the accounting specific software on his own; this is where the partnership approach that we take really came through. He knew his software, and we know terminal server clusters. Together, we were able to get it done,” Sevier stated. Often times, data center providers draw a hard line between customer responsibilities and their own. In this case, combined knowledge of software and infrastructure helped push the project to the finish line.

With the solution implemented, the DataBank team tested the terminal server and test launched all software. A number of end users served as beta testers prior to going live. The finished project resulted in a more consistent and easier to manage platform overall.

## Primed for Growth with a Technology Solution That Transforms Many Locations Into One

After the close of the project, the customer was empowered to handle frontline IT tasks with ease. Should an end user have a problem with software, for example, they’re able to address it easily, thanks to no longer having to worry about a multitude of IT environments.

By consolidating end user issues into one terminal server, it’s easy to update one policy across numerous locations. Resolutions are simple because it’s a single change to solve a problem for all users. Not to mention, the customer didn’t have to bring additional IT staff on board, which eliminated potentially significant costs.

“We go further in engineering a solution. Any data center can sell you what you ask for, it’s not hard to quote cores and gigs. But DataBank wants the best outcome, and that’s more than cores, gigs, and number of servers. It’s about the business outcome you’re trying to achieve,” Sevier concluded.

Looking forward, the customer’s growth initiatives are aggressive. The DataBank solution didn’t just solve the problems at hand; it provided a design pattern that allows the customer to scale as needed. As they grow, the DataBank solution grows with them.

## ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE



### Technology Challenges

- The customer's IT team was comprised of one IT manager, whose primary responsibilities were difficult to focus on as managing disparate IT environments was becoming a burden.
- Fixed devices such as printers presented configuration issues due to lack of consistency, serving as an additional source of distraction.
- Downtime was a risky concern, with critical accounting software running locally in each location.
- Current infrastructure wasn't scalable for continued growth.



### Solutions

#### Primary:

- DataBank Private Cloud

#### Supporting:

- HA Cisco Firewalls
- Terminal server cluster
- App servers for critical systems
- Third-party compliance and vulnerability scanning
- Two-factor authentication
- Load balancers
- Storage as a Service.



### Business Outcomes

- The customer gained a central point of IT management that applies to all office locations, removing the stress of juggling disparate environments.
- Downtime risks were eliminated, with DataBank running software locally in a premier data center.
- A repeatable template design was put into place, resulting in the ability to make changes for all users consistently.
- Significant cost savings were realized, with no need to hire additional IT staff.

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## ABOUT DATABANK:

DataBank is a leading provider of enterprise-class data center, cloud, and connectivity services, offering customers 100% uptime availability of data, applications, and infrastructure. DataBank's managed data center services are anchored in world-class facilities that cater to today's network and computing edge – users and applications in dense but underserved markets.

DataBank provides its suite of services in a truly hybrid model allowing enterprises to port workloads, technologies and even contract terms from data center to data center and from cloud to colocation, with compliance certifications to meet the most stringent demands. By evolving the data center experience in this manner, our customers are able to more effectively manage risk, improve technology performance and focus on growth.

DataBank is headquartered in the historic former Federal Reserve Bank Building in downtown Dallas, TX and has additional data centers in North Dallas, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Baltimore and Kansas City.

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