

MOUNTAIN ROSE HERBS

Mountain Rose Herbs Goes Green with Hyper-converged Data Center Infrastructure



SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- Like many mature data centers, MRH's data center had evolved into a hodgepodge of legacy systems from multiple vendors that were not designed to work together.
- To ensure their data center strategy stays ahead of organization expansion needs, MRH chose a VxRail four node HCI for their new data center.
- MRH also deployed two Nexus 9000 Series switches and new Meraki cloud-managed security appliances to connect their new VxRail HCI efficiently and securely.

Located in Eugene, Oregon, Mountain Rose Herbs offers high-quality organically-grown herbs, spices, teas, essential oils, and botanical goods direct-to-consumer. Since 1987, they have been known for their uncompromising commitment to organic agriculture, fair trade standards, and sustainable business practices. The company's core belief that people, plants, and planet are more important than profit guides everything they do.

Mountain Rose Herbs (MRH) is continuously growing and evolving. The company currently employs over 200 people across seven separate facilities. In 2016, MRH opened its first brick and mortar store. As their footprint and their customer base expanded, MRH started outgrowing their existing data center.

The Challenge

Like many mature data centers, MRH's data center had evolved into a hodgepodge of legacy systems from multiple vendors that were not designed to work together. System administration was resource-intensive and time-consuming. Newer next-generation data centers with hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI) could offer improved performance, more capabilities and features, and require less rack space, power and cooling expense. MRH needed a solution with the

capacity to meet its current requirements and the ability to expand for future business requirements while aligning with their corporate goal of improving the environment.

We caught up with Chris Baumgardt, IT Manager at Mountain Rose Herbs, to learn more about how their commitment to the environment influenced their decision to upgrade their data center. *"Mountain Rose Herbs is very committed to responsible environmental stewardship, and this was a driving influence on the decision to upgrade our data center using virtualization and specifically a hyper-converged infrastructure."* Chris explained, *"We wanted to greatly reduce our data center power and cooling costs and lessen our impact on the environment while still allowing for future company growth."*

The Solution

When MRH went looking for a partner to help them design and implement a new data center solution, they found Cerium. We talked with Chris about choosing to partner with Cerium on this project, *“When talking to Dell EMC about VxRail, we indicated that we could use a partner to help us with planning and implementation and they gave us a few suggestions. Cerium was the most responsive and helpful of the vendors we looked at for this critical project. They picked up on what was important to us and what we would need to succeed right away.”*

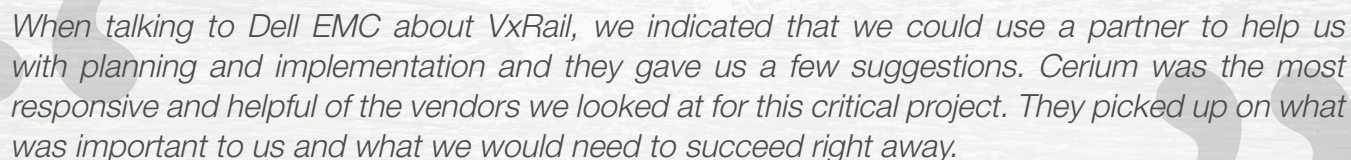
Cerium Senior Systems Engineer Ray Hall was up to the challenge. Ray and the MRH team determined that consolidating servers, storage, networking and other infrastructure components into a centrally managed HCI framework, and combining separate hardware layers into a single, software-defined solution, could help address MRH's issues.

The size of the data center was an important consideration in the design. Unutilized capacity requires rack space, power, and cooling facilities that ultimately increase the TCO and significantly impact data center ROI. Designing an appropriately sized data center could minimize power consumption. However, the solution required the potential to grow and evolve to accommodate additional users and complicated apps in the future.

The solution they landed on was VxRail. A fully integrated, preconfigured and tested HCI appliance powered by VMware Hyper-Converged Software, VxRail is one of the easiest ways to stand up a hyper-converged infrastructure environment. Powered by VMware vSAN and Dell EMC PowerEdge servers, VxRail delivers continuous innovation with future-proof performance, predictably transforms with next-gen simplicity, and creates certainty with hardened security advancements.

They also determined that replacing aging network infrastructure and implementing cloud managed switches would help them get the most value from their new data center and reduce their carbon footprint even further. This also presented an opportunity to implement stronger security appliances to make their network and their data center more secure.

To ensure their data center strategy stays ahead of organization expansion needs, MRH chose a VxRail four node HCI for their new data center. Each node in a VxRail appliance is configured with at least one disk group, and each disk group includes one SSD for caching and one or multiple HDDs. VxRail seamlessly scales out as needed, one node at a time.

A large, light-colored graphic of a double quote mark is positioned behind the testimonial text.

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— Chris Baumgardt, IT Manager, Mountain Rose Herbs



MRH also deployed two Nexus 9000 Series switches and new Meraki cloud-managed security appliances to connect their new VxRail HCI efficiently and securely. The Nexus 9000 Series switches are highly programmable and feature industry leading SDN for data center automation. Nexus switches deliver proven high performance and density, low latency, and exceptional power efficiency. While the Meraki security appliances give administrators complete control over the users, content, and applications on their network.

The Results

The new data center environment has a much smaller footprint, is less complex physically and operationally, and requires less overhead to manage and maintain. The new infrastructure also delivers more performance while consuming less power and dissipating heat much more efficiently. MRH is seeing major improvements in data center power and cooling efficiency--contributing to their bottom line as well as their commitment to creating a greener planet.

Chris was impressed with the results, *“Mountain Rose Herbs is projecting \$50,000 savings in direct power costs over three years with the new VxRail cluster and more savings from reducing the cooling needs for our data center. This impact is felt on our bottom line and in a benefit for the environment.”*

Chris went on to say, *“We don’t have a large IT team, and this solution has also allowed us to greatly simplify management of our data center environment and easily scale as MRH grows without overloading the team. IT can now concentrate on adding value to MRH rather than dealing with infrastructure issues full-time.”*

We asked Chris what advice he would give others thinking of taking on a project like this, *“Data Center operations are always a critical function at any organization. Make sure you have a great partner like Cerium to help you in planning and implementation. No matter how much expertise you have in your organization, a reliable partner that has experience in the project you are undertaking can help ensure you don’t miss anything important and assist in ensuring project success.”*

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