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EFFICIENT APPLICATION MANAGEMENT AT A GLOBAL INSURANCE COMPANY: Fewer Base Images and Greater Flexibility with FlexApp



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Senior Desktop Engineer

One of the world's largest insurance companies, with some 170,000 employees and dozens of affiliates with their own IT facilities, has a rather complex IT landscape. This also applies to the workspace infrastructure. To improve efficiency, the organization set up a virtual desktop environment for its internal employees and affiliate companies. However, application management remained complex because several applications could not be virtualized, and additional images were needed to deliver these applications. Reducing the number of golden images, ensuring security and future-proofing application management, were the main reasons to start working with Liquidware FlexApp™ Application Portability.

The Senior Desktop Engineer involved in the project gives their insights into the project:

The main challenge with centralized workspace management

"Our organization is complex in terms of architecture, partly because of the many subsidiaries. These companies each have their own IT environments, which gradually merge into the parent organization. We therefore chose one central solution for our workplace, in the form of a Citrix® VDI environment. This way, we can centrally guarantee access and security of the workspaces, and also influence the user experience. Both internal employees and subsidiaries use this set up."

The parent organization is also responsible for application management. In Europe alone, this involves some 800 applications. "Initially, we virtualized the applications via Microsoft's App-V. However, we noticed that many applications – especially the highly specialized ones – could not be packaged this way. We would then create an additional image to install this



Organization:
Insurance Company



Desktop Users:
170,000 employees and dozens of affiliates with their own IT facilities



Products:
FlexApp™

FlexApp™ is an advanced “application portability” solution. Applications are decoupled from the OS, allowing administrators to easily update and assign applications to users without changing base images. The affected applications then display and behave as if they were traditionally installed, without “contaminating” the operating system. With FlexApp, applications can be automatically packaged, significantly fewer images are required, application delivery is simplified and security is increased. FlexApp is platform independent and can deliver applications to all Windows® workspaces.

application and to be able to deliver it. Of course, the number of images quickly grew and created a large management burden. When you don't update frequently, you also run security risks, so this became a way too high management burden. Also, no new features had been appearing in App-V for a long time and it became clear that the solution would eventually disappear.”

Compatibility and simplicity

“We started looking at alternatives to App-V and tested several solutions extensively. In the end, we kept running into the same two objections: either the product was very complex, or the compatibility was insufficient. We have two fairly large packaging teams, so we didn't want a solution that required specialized knowledge. Ease of use was therefore a prerequisite. With FlexApp, we found the simplicity and high level of compatibility that we were looking for. Staff sometimes use very specific applications, for example to perform risk analyses. These applications always fell outside App-V's capabilities and had to be manually installed. This would take an hour, which of course did not contribute to productivity. These applications have now been successfully converted to 'FlexApps' and can be delivered and updated quickly and

efficiently. We also find the independence of the backend a key advantage. Applications work independently of this backend so no complex infrastructure is needed that would require maintenance. In addition, it is important that we can use the same solution and packages for both virtual and physical mobile workspaces, both online and offline.”

Step by step, application by application

The insurance company has chosen to onboard all applications to FlexApp step by step. Every time an “old” application needs to be updated; they immediately turn it into a FlexApp application. “Our goal is to eventually onboard as many applications as possible and reduce the number of images by 75%. We are well on our way, but are not there yet. We hope to use the package automation module within FlexApp more in the future. We now see that many App-V packages are manually scripted and it takes time to convert them. Fortunately, we are well supported by Liquidware and get a lot of help – even after the initial training sessions. It's nice to know that we can continue to use FlexApps in the future, even if we change our workspace environments.”



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