CASE STUDY:
Manufacturing company achieves 90 percent server utilization with AHEAD Converged Infrastructure solution.
The Challenge:
The Vollrath Company was looking to consolidate its infrastructure to provide a more unified backbone for its evolving and growing IT needs.

The Solution:
VCE Vblock 540 with XtremIO

The Results:
» 90 percent server virtualization
» Zero or minimal downtime
» Networking, storage, compute all in one frame
» Fast, easy implementation
» Workload consolidation
» Scalability

Who Is The Vollrath Company?
For more than 139 years, The Vollrath Company has been serving the foodservice industry with a reputation for the design, development, and manufacture of the foodservice industry’s finest small wares and equipment. The company is unique in its ability to offer one of the widest ranges of products in the industry while staying true to the promise that comes with every product that carries the Vollrath name – quality, engineering, design, and craftsmanship that stands the test of time. From serving utensils to mobile kiosks, the industry’s most powerful website, and the popular Vollrath University training center, Vollrath is a one-stop shop for products, consultation, and educational and technical resources for the 19 distinct market segments it serves.

With a collection of exceptional people, industry leading products, and helpful consultative services, Vollrath is assembled for one purpose – to help customers outperform every day.

The Challenge:
The Vollrath Company had been experiencing rapid growth after making a series of acquisitions. From an IT perspective, that means they had to have a system that could easily scale. “When it came to scalability, we were very limited with physical servers,” says Dave Grams, a Systems Engineer at Vollrath. Grams says, “We just didn’t have the room to expand and bring more systems in-house as we were making our acquisitions. We were spending a lot of time on this old hardware, trying to maintain it. We needed to get a better overall visual of the entire system and find better ways to support it.” Grams adds, “One of the things we
wanted to do better was start to eliminate single points of failure in our system. With all of the individual servers that were running, we had a hard time supporting each one. If one server had hardware issues, that App could have been down for hours or days, and we needed to eliminate the possibility of that happening."

John Sharp, the IT Manager at The Vollrath Company, says “The old system just had too many moving pieces that could fail. We needed something that was rock solid and reliable.” He goes on to say, “We needed to be agile and grow, but we couldn’t grow the staff.”

The Search For A Strategic IT Partner

The Vollrath Company went in search of an IT partner that could offer them more than just a “one size fits all” solution. They needed a partner that could understand the company’s unique needs and work with them to develop a strategy that would match. “We were looking for an IT partner that was committed to helping us grow, says Sharp. “We didn’t need a company that would offer us a solution just based on what we could afford, we needed a true picture of what’s available, we needed to know what our options were, and then based on that, we needed to make the best choice for our business.”

Vollrath chose AHEAD, an award-winning IT consultancy that’s been recognized as VCE’s Global Partner of the Year. “We chose AHEAD because they were a strategic partner that had many resources, including a Lab and Briefing Center where they offer things like executive and technical briefings and lab demonstrations,” says Sharp. Systems Engineer Dave Grams liked the fact that AHEAD offered more than just one generic solution. He says, they provided options and an easy to follow plan to execute their needs. “AHEAD is not only very knowledgeable in all aspects of technology,” says Grams, “They also gave us a choice. They didn’t just offer option A, they offered multiple options that really fit our business needs.”

The Solution: Vblock From VCE

When it came to which solution would best fit Vollrath’s needs, there was one solution from VCE that clearly stood out. “We implemented the VCE Vblock 540 with XtremeIO,” says Peter Minear, Vollrath’s Manager of Web Development and Infrastructure. He says, “The solution is really a converged infrastructure that gives us the ability to spin up servers as we need them, rather than trying to purchase hardware one at a time.” Minear adds, “We can do development, testing, and production all within the same block or within different servers. So, we’re really able to be more flexible.”

“The implementation of the Vblock with AHEAD was great,” says Grams. “Everything seemed to go by the book, no questions asked, from configuration all the way through delivery and set up.” Grams says, “The AHEAD installation techs had an answer for everything. They always seemed to have a person who had the right answers. Everything went great.”

The Results:

“As a result of AHEAD’s implementation of the new Vblock, Vollrath “has a much more stable environment” according to Grams. He says, “We’ve vir-
tualized probably 80 to 90 percent of our servers, eliminating all of the hardware that we needed to maintain. The redundancy within the Vblock itself is wonderful because if we do have a hardware addition with anything on the Vblock, the VMs stay up and running. We have zero or minimal down-time and we are able to get past that hurdle. Now, he says, “we’ve got the scalability for any new acquisitions that come up.”

The Vollrath/AHEAD Partnership
The success of the Vblock implementation has only cemented what has already been a rock solid relationship between AHEAD and The Vollrath Company. To a person, the leadership at Vollrath raves about how AHEAD’s innovation and ability to provide cutting edge solutions, have helped this 140-plus year old company to evolve and remain relevant today and into the future. “What makes our partnership with AHEAD special is that we have a great working relationship with the entire company, with the engineers on the back end, not just the sales channel. They are all easy to work with, they have the best and brightest people, and they are constantly improving their skills, says Sharp. He says, "AHEAD even offers events, specifically the annual Looking AHEAD Tech Summit, that people in our local area can attend at our company so that we can all learn about the advantages of the latest technology." He adds, “Not every partner is willing to do that.”

Minear agrees, and says, "What I like most about working with AHEAD is really their expertise, the skills that they bring to the table, and the ability to help us out when it comes to implementing the solutions that we’ve used with them.” He says, “Thanks to AHEAD, Vollrath is taking another giant step ahead. We are really set for the next several years for our expansion and growth in our industry.”

Learn more about the AHEAD Lab and Briefing Center! http://www.thinkahead.com/ahead-lab/