



SUPERIOR HEALTH LINENS

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SUPERIOR HEALTH LINENS BUILDS 'VIRTUAL COMPANY' IN THE CLOUD

"I really like the idea of having a virtual company," says Scott Reppert, CEO of Superior Health Linens (SHL). "I think for a lot of people that's a hard thing to understand. But when you think about the nuts and bolts of the information component of what we do—it's all housed at 5NINES... SHL is a virtual company."

Reppert dislikes the term "Cloud." But when he talks about his "virtual company," he's essentially describing his company's private Cloud, managed and hosted at 5NINES. SHL operates almost entirely in the Cloud, accessing mission-critical data and applications via the Internet from its virtual private servers located in the 5NINES cloud center.

SHL's story perfectly illustrates the benefits today's dynamic companies are getting from Cloud computing—an easily scalable and replicable infrastructure, a predictable cost structure, better response to workloads, high availability and redundancy, and reliable IT management and support.

FOCUSING ON CORE COMPETENCIES

"We're a real niche company," Reppert says. "We do one thing—laundry for hospitals and nursing homes."

SHL provides laundry and textile rental services to the healthcare industry from its three plants in Madison, Milwaukee and Batavia, Ill. Focusing on operations that are core to that "one thing" and outsourcing operations such as IT services is part of Reppert's business philosophy.

"We don't have an IT department," Reppert says. "We never will. That's why we have 5NINES. As long as we stay focused on the nature of our relationship with our customers, which is delivering a high-quality, inexpensive product, and we don't worry about all the other bells and whistles that come with running a company, we do a good job."

SHL focuses its energies on buying textiles that meet customers' specific needs, managing its operations and improving customer service and employee relations. Reppert knows they're not IT experts but realizes the importance of technology to SHL's growth.



SHL Facilities

Madison, WI | Milwaukee, WI | Batavia, IL

Employees/Workstations: 300/50

History

5NINES had been providing onsite IT support and lifecycle management for SHL since 2003.

Challenge

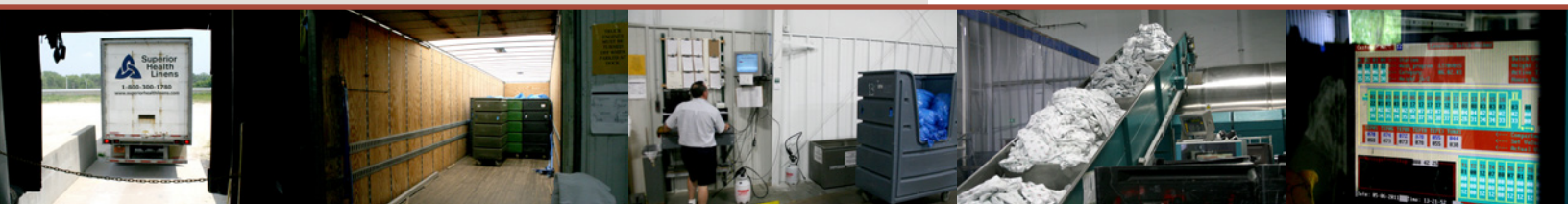
SHL's technology infrastructure was difficult to manage, unreliable and outdated. They needed to create a reliable, robust IT infrastructure that would give them the capacity to grow.

Solution

5NINES was selected for its highly technical personnel and its ability to design, host and manage a modular, replicable IT infrastructure for SHL, which includes a private Cloud in the 5NINES CloudCenter.

Results

SHL's Cloud infrastructure is equipped to handle future computing needs and can be deployed quickly to new plants. There's a plan in place for upgrading hardware, and IT expenses are known. 5NINES provides 24/7/365 technical support.



(CONTINUED)

When Reppert became an owner and the CEO in 2007, SHL was processing 24 million pounds of laundry. Last year, they finished at 48 million pounds, and this year they anticipate doing 52 million pounds.

“That’s pretty rapid growth,” Reppert says. “And we really, truly couldn’t have done it without support from 5NINES. It wouldn’t have happened.”

GROWING PAINS

In the fall of 2010, SHL started to take a hard look at its technology infrastructure, focusing on how it would handle the next phase of the company’s growth. Overall, SHL’s technology was becoming difficult to manage and needed upgrades. It was also unreliable and prone to breaking down during critical operations, such as invoicing.

“As a small company, we’re very dependent on our technology to produce invoices,” Reppert says. “The clean laundry that gets delivered to a customer runs across a scale; that scale is integrated into our computer system, which goes right to building the invoice. Without that communication piece, we’re in big trouble.”

Server capacity was also an issue for SHL. “Whenever we wanted to do something, it was always a question of, how do we do this with our servers?” Reppert says. “Everything was a server question. And really, there were probably only two people in the whole company who even understood the question.”

SHL needed to create a new technology infrastructure that gave them capacity to grow. It had to be scalable, to accommodate future computing needs, and easy to deploy quickly to new plants. In addition, SHL wanted to control costs, while maintaining cutting-edge equipment.

MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD

5NINES had been providing onsite IT support and lifecycle management to SHL since 2003, and Reppert was confident

that 5NINES was the right IT partner for the future as well. He describes 5NINES as “like-minded” to SHL—“growth-oriented” and “people-oriented”—with “highly technical” personnel.

Still, the decision to outsource SHL’s entire IT infrastructure wasn’t made lightly. At an investment upwards of \$20,000, SHL needed to see the ROI. “In our case, if we have the capacity to grow, that’s where we get our ROI,” Reppert says.

To deliver the ROI that SHL needed, 5NINES migrated SHL to a private Cloud in the 5NINES CloudCenter in downtown Madison. Here, 5NINES manages SHL’s virtual private servers and applications as well as Microsoft’s shared Exchange and DataSafe backup. Users in SHL’s three plants connect to the Cloud via a

virtual private network (VPN) through the Internet, using thin clients, laptops and desktops. Everything is managed by 5NINES.

Reppert remembers 5NINES promising three key benefits:

- Increased server capacity / scalability
- A program to control the cost of hardware/software upgrades
- 24/7 support to address technical issues



Scott Reppert, CEO of SHL, with 5NINES business development manager Bill Dermody

CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY AT CONTROLLED COSTS

“5NINES lived up to their end of the bargain, and it was easy to make a decision,” Reppert says. “Our COO, Greg Schermerhorn, is very concerned about how we spend our pennies, and the migration of equipment—getting upgraded equipment for the people that use it the most and being able to downgrade over a course of time—for him that was a huge thing.”

Upfront costs for transitioning to a managed private Cloud were actually a bit more than what it would be for SHL to manage its own IT.

“But in the long run, we all see that it will be less expensive,” Reppert says. “And more than anything, it’s seamless. We don’t have to deal with the minute by minute, hour by hour potential downtime, with no idea what we’re going to do. **Now, we call 5NINES.**”

WHAT IS THE CLOUD?

The Cloud is a new paradigm for delivering information and services, making them accessible from any device (desktops, laptops, smartphones, thin clients), any location (office, home, coffee shop), at any time, via communications networks and the Internet. Your applications and data live and run from servers that can be located anywhere—even multiple locations—around the world.

Enjoy the benefits of operating in the 5NINES Cloud:

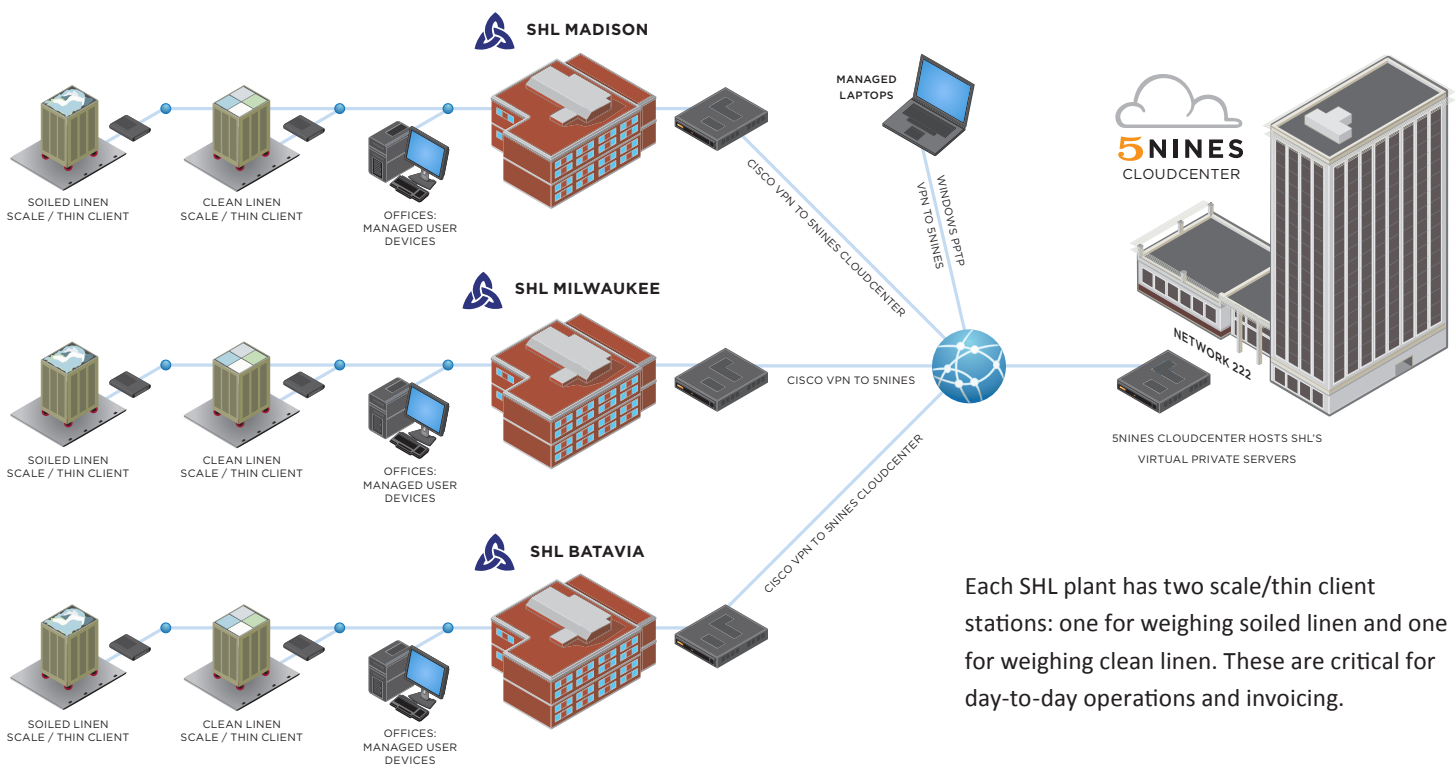
- A rapidly scalable and replicable infrastructure
- New business capabilities
- Better response to workloads
- Resource pooling
- Reduced costs / predictable cost structure
- Broad network access
- High availability and redundancy
- Reliable IT management and support
- Increased security
- No end-of-life issues

“We don’t have an IT department, we never will. That’s why we have 5NINES.”

—Scott Reppert, CEO of SHL

A **Private Cloud** is a Cloud infrastructure operated solely for your organization. It can be managed by your organization or by 5NINES and may exist on premise or in the 5NINES CloudCenter.

SUPERIOR HEALTH LINENS PRIVATE CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE





CLOUD TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

Here are some of the world-class technologies 5NINES uses to power Superior Health Linens' private Cloud infrastructure.



Server 2008 R2 RDS: Remote Desktop Services is used for SHL's business-critical applications—ABS (accessed via thin clients) and Great Plains—allowing for access from anywhere via the Internet.

Windows System Resource Manager is particularly useful on SHL's RDS instances to keep memory and processor usage under control, prioritizing resources for business-critical applications.

Windows 7 Sync Center: For SHL employees that aren't doing their computing in the Cloud, Sync keeps their mobile laptop's most important data synced with SHL's private Cloud.

Distributed WSUS (Windows Server Update Services) keeps SHL's multiple branches up-to-date with security patches and updates.

Windows System Image Manager is used for creating automated deployments of SHL workstations/laptops. It's very useful for fast deployment for a new employee/branch or for replacement of damaged/failed hardware.

Hosted Exchange: 5NINES hosts 40+ email accounts for SHL.

5NINES designed SHL's virtual private network (VPN) using a Cisco dynamic multi-point VPN (DMVPN) hub and spoke VPN topology. Routing flows through the core router in the 5NINES CloudCenter, which has a 100Mb/sec connection (compared to 1.5Mb/sec T1), with multiple redundant links to the Internet.

With SHL's old system, the Milwaukee and Batavia plants were connected to the Madison plant. If the T1 went down at Madison, all sites were down. Additionally, a single T1 does not provide much capacity. In the new environment, each of the three sites connects to the 5NINES CloudCenter. If one location's T1 goes down, only that site is affected.

Most importantly, the new network is easy to scale, so that if SHL decides to open a new plant, 5NINES can easily extend SHL's private network to it.

5NINES used VMware to virtualize SHL's infrastructure to the 5NINES Cloud, affording them several advantages over their previous onsite installations, including:

- no hardware end-of-life issues
- an 80x increase in bandwidth
- the ability to scale resources up and down as needed
- safer patch/os updates management
- increased uptime
- faster support response

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