CASE STUDY

A data center migration, hospital acquisition, and a pandemic – with no disruption to patient services

Summary:

Just days into the global COVID-19 pandemic, TDS and its TransitionManager platform helped Baptist Health successfully migrate its IT operations to a new data center without disruption to services across hospitals, care centers, physician offices and outpatient facilities.

The Challenge:

Multiple hospital and medical practice acquisitions, an aging data center with a lack of redundancy, and the need to convert more space into medical labs quickly resulted in Baptist Health outgrowing their existing data center in Louisville, Kentucky.

A colocation site was chosen, but the team needed an experienced vendor to navigate the complex planning and execution of the migration that became more complex as a pandemic hit and hospital and medical group acquisition took place.

High growth, high demand

Baptist Health was rapidly growing its services network – and outgrowing its current data center in Louisville. Due to the high demand of electrical service power in the area surrounding the data center, the utility provider could not deliver a secondary feed, leaving the site without redundancy. Although regular investments were made into critical infrastructure, the aging data center reached its end of life, requiring either a major capital build and infrastructure investments, or a move to a co-location provider.

To perform the data center migration, Baptist Health sought a vendor with deep expertise. The challenge became more daunting when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in the first quarter of 2020, as the Baptist Health family of hospitals, care centers, physician offices and outpatient facilities needed to ensure the safety of staff and patients, while delivering healthcare without disruption.

The Baptist Health project team unanimously chose TDS based on several factors:
- decades of experience managing complex migrations (including deep experience in healthcare)
- feedback from highly satisfied customers indicating confidence that TDS could get the job done without disrupting business operations
- TransitionManager, built by and for TDS practitioners to address the biggest challenges in performing a migration, leveraged by major technology partners, service providers and IT organizations.

Benefits of "a single source of truth"

Baptist Health did not have a single source of consolidated IT data, but multiple databases and spreadsheets maintained to track IT assets, owned by different users. During recent hospital and medical group acquisitions, data was migrated from different platforms to the standardized Epic electronic medical record system used by Baptist Health, but not all older systems were decommissioned.

A successful discovery phase for any migration will aggregate data from disparate sources so it can be validated, normalized, and consolidated into a single source of truth and enable faster, accurate decision-making. TDS's TransitionManager software platform accelerated this phase by taking in data from available sources of data, leveraging its rules engine to normalize data, consolidating it into a single repository accessible to all project stakeholders.

Data was then immediately available in a visual dependency map. This made validating data with application owners quick and easy with browser access to TransitionManager. Each node in the map provided 1-click access to every known data point for each asset, enabling the project team to work together remotely and transparently to track both business and IT requirements in one place. The team was confident in the accuracy of the data for decision making and planning.

The pandemic hits

Although every business unit faced unprecedented challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IT project team continued with little disruption. Following a one-month project delay due to down-staffing, the planning for move events was complete. Because of a common platform for managing all tasks, the work could be executed remotely.

TransitionManager is a collaborative platform for managing complex IT projects. Every team member has access to the same data, and all the relevant data regarding assets, requirements, move events, and task sequencing is stored within TransitionManager.

TransitionManager enabled everyone to remain informed, and the team to remain on schedule.

Orchestrating move events

With a trusted source of data established, TDS worked with the Baptist Health team to group 4,000 servers and 286 applications to be moved. Leveraging the visual dependency analyzer feature in TransitionManager, the team dynamically modeled move groups, and TransitionManager automatically highlighted conflicts and dependency issues in each scenario.

TDS worked with the Baptist Health IT team to develop low-level technical runbooks and automation scripts, mapping a conceptual design required for the migration based on TDS best practice templates and the organization's requirements.

TransitionManager provided automated task management for all key stakeholders with a queue for each team and team member with tasks and each task only available for action once every preceding task was successfully completed.

Managers and executive sponsors could oversee the overall execution of all tasks in real-time with a color-coded graph that identified bottlenecks or problems. The teams worked together to test and rehearse runbooks.

It's go time!

Move events every three weeks were well rehearsed and planned with fine tuning and adjustment of tasks as necessary. The largest hurdle was juggling priorities for the IT organization.

Business units picked a one-hour window for their preferred migration time. TDS made sure that each request was immediately met. The migration was complicated, in part, because some Baptist Health teams were still dedicated to work related to the health system's latest acquisition.

With easily accessible data, the TDS team could easily remove a set of servers from a move group, identify which assets could replace them in TransitionManager, notify the appropriate app owners, and then dynamically regenerate a runbook for execution.

The bottom line: no surprises!

The migration events were uneventful because the team was so well prepared and confident in the process because of TransitionManager's ability to provide an accurate and actionable set of data for decision-making.

TransitionManager brought both transparency and accountability to the migration by enabling all team members a consistent view into the data and progress of the project. It was easy to see the importance of every step in the process and recognize the value of each team member. IT managers repeatedly leveraged TransitionManager throughout the migration to ensure the business units were ready for their scheduled move.

The IT team found TransitionManager so reliable that they continued their use of TransitionManager after the project ended to continue to clean, normalize, and manage data in preparation for exporting into a new IT Service Management platform that they were implementing.

Key takeaways

- IT infrastructure was migrated without any unplanned downtime, disruption to patient care or schedule delays due to the COVID-19 outbreak days after migration events started.

- With strong executive sponsorship, there was minimal impact to business and efficient move events.
- TDS became a trusted partner that delivered accurate data for decision making, accelerated planning through automation when the health system was taxed with COVID-19 patient care and enabled a near fully remote team to collaboratively plan, schedule and perform the migration.
- Baptist Health continues to leverage TransitionManager to maintain its consolidated, actionable source of data as they implement new systems to track IT assets across all facilities.