

# Case Study

## Managed Services



### Client:

### Ascend Learning

Ascend Learning is a leading provider of technology-based educational, curriculum and assessment solutions for healthcare and other vocational industries. A 1000+ employee company headquartered in Burlington, MA and Kansas City, MO, with additional offices in Arizona, Minnesota, and California. Ascend is comprised of 8 different companies located across the country serving secondary, post-secondary and professional education markets in nursing, allied health, emergency services, insurance and finance industries, fitness and many other health science professions.

| Challenge  | CBTS Solution  | Results   |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ascend needed a new data center hosting provider for between 600-800 virtual and physical servers (combined), 100TB of storage, and two redundant, active-active sites for several critical applications.</li> <li>Needed monitoring of infrastructure at remote locations and URLs.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBTS provided design, build and run services.</li> <li>Monitoring and management services for the client's IT environment.</li> <li>A backup solution that protects over 140 TBs of data.</li> <li>Business Unit specific failover capability.</li> <li>Capacity planning, trend forecasting and server environment health checks.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial cost savings achieved through consolidation and economies of scale.</li> <li>A simplified, logical and well thought out environment to support the business.</li> <li>Reduced incident resolution times due to our integration and ownership.</li> <li>Reduced need to maintain internal expertise across multiple technologies .</li> </ul> |

**Cloud, covered.**

## Business Challenge

The company grew through acquisition, which led to disparate systems in various locations. In September 2012, Ascend issued an RFP to select a new solution for data center hosting and consolidation.

As stated in the RFP, Ascend Learning plans to select a new data center hosting provider for between 600-800 virtual and physical servers (combined), 100TB of storage, and two redundant, active-active sites for several critical applications.

After the Data Center project was completed, Ascend came to CBTS for monitoring of infrastructure at remote locations and URLs.

## CBTS Solution

CBTS After considerable review of options and costs, Ascend Learning chose a CapEx model for their data center consolidation project. CBTS' experience and expertise was particularly valuable to Ascend's team as their staff had not undertaken a project of this size or scope. Upon completion of the Design, Build, Run project, CBTS is contracted to manage Ascend's steady state environment including:

- Monitoring and managing almost 1,200 devices (in CBTS partner data centers and on customer premises).
- Monitoring over 250 business critical URLs.
- Managing almost 600 TB of storage on 4 SANs.
- Deploying a backup solution that protects over 140 TBs of data utilizing only 50TB to do so.
- Fully integrated Change and Incident Management processes between organizations.
- Patch management and installation for both Linux and Windows environments.
- Business Unit specific failover capability.
- Capacity planning, trend forecasting and server environment health checks.

## Services Used

The client now has a fully scalable, on-demand, and cost-effective storage infrastructure, with the following benefits:

- Eliminates spending capital on day one for all future storage needs, freeing up financial resources for other critical business initiatives.
- Storage deployed as needed on a per GB monthly utility basis, adding agility and cost-effectiveness to the business operation.
- Storage turned off when the demand goes down, saving on storage cost, rack/power/floor space.
- Allows internal IT to focus on more mission-critical projects.

**Cloud, covered.**

## Engineers/Consultants deployed on the project

CBTS provided a few lead engineers including:

- A Service Delivery Manager
- A Project Manager
- A Virtualization Engineer II
- A Senior Network Engineer
- A Windows Systems Engineer III
- A Monitoring Expert

## Results

Ascend is experiencing an “all time” company record in up-time since the transition. In addition, other notable results include:

- Substantial cost savings achieved through consolidation and economies of scale.
- A simplified, logical and well thought out environment to support the business.
- Reduced incident resolution times due to our integration and ownership.
- Increased scope and reduced timeline of project due to efficiencies gained through partnership.
- Centralized patching and server management across Ascend Learning's individual Business Units.
- Reduced need to maintain internal expertise across multiple technologies due to partnership.
- Integrated team approach between the companies promoting a “sounding board” approach to problems, solutions and project launches.