



Cerner Corporation Case Study

Cerner Corporation drives efficiencies across rapidly expanding Microsoft Cloud environment

Cerner's goal is to contribute to the systemic improvement of healthcare delivery and the health of communities – the same mindset that drives their virtualization team to find efficiencies across their environment. With a rapidly growing Hyper-V environment, healthcare technology company Cerner found monitoring and managing performance of virtual machines increasingly time consuming. 5nine Manager offered the ideal solution.

FASTER, MORE EFFECTIVE VIRTUAL MACHINE MONITORING

Maximizing performance across its IT infrastructure is essential to optimize Cerner's service levels, so when an issue arose with its Hyper-V virtualization platform that was reducing the efficiency of its internal operations, something had to be done fast. With 24 hosts, monitoring the performance of its virtual machines (VMs) was becoming increasingly hard work. Ken Enginger, Senior Systems Engineer at Cerner, and his team were desperate to find a solution.

"If we wanted to monitor any of our VMs, we had to go directly to the core," explains Enginger. "If we wanted to check out the health of a particular VM, we had to first find out where it was located. We then had to go to that host to assess what state the VM was in. The number of hosts we had to deal with made this miserable."

The fact that Cerner moved many of its VMs from one core to another highlighted the need to act fast, because it meant that some documentation wasn't being updated and it became a major problem to find where certain machines actually lived.

"This had an impact on our ability to manage our Hyper-V environment," says Enginger. "The fact we couldn't find certain VMs made it really tough to make the necessary changes that were required to assist our end users. We were having to open 20 or more documents and do a search to find out. It was clear we needed a solution that enabled us to monitor our VMs far more effectively."

Enginger and his team identified three potential vendors to help resolve this challenge, but 5nine Manager came out on top as the software solution that best met their needs.

"5nine Manager appeared to be the right fit, because first and foremost it solved the central issue of us not being able to establish the status of all our VMs through a single pane of glass," says Enginger. "You're always hesitant when you buy new software, because you're never quite sure exactly how it's going to impact your environment – that's simply the nature of the technology. However, we were in no doubt that a solution had to be found and 5nine Manager looked by far our best option. What's more, the 5nine team did a great job in demonstrating the full power of the product and why it was relevant for us."

During the evaluation process, 5nine was able to show the Cerner team the visibility they would get not only at the host level, but also into the remote VMs at different locations. Just as Enginger wanted, the performance of all VMs could be closely monitored from a single point of control.

However, as Enginger discovered, this was just one of several ways in which 5nine Manager was able to streamline the management of their Hyper-V environments. For instance, it also enables the rapid cloning of VMs. This means companies like Cerner can significantly improve service levels by delivering additional capacity to their clients quickly and efficiently when they need it to meet their growth demands. Furthermore, implementing

Customer Profile

Headquarters: North Kansas City, MO

Industry: Health Care

Annual Revenue: 3.4 Billion

Cerner Challenges:

- Insufficient visibility of virtual machines
- Difficult and time-consuming process to monitor VM performance
- Restricted ability to manage Hyper-V environment
- Slowing client response times
- Need to keep IT expenditure to a minimum

Key functions 5nine Manager has delivered

5nine Manager has enabled Cerner to:

- Monitor the performance of their VMs from a single point of control
- Use existing resources and accelerate the time to production, thanks to the familiar "VSphere" look and feel
- Better meet users' growth needs through the ability to rapidly clone VMs

How 5nine Manager has transformed Cerner's Hyper-V environment

Some of the major benefits 5nine Manager has brought Ken Enginger's team include:

- A 75% reduction in time taken to locate VMs and solve user problems
- Much more streamlined decommissioning process
- Minimum downtime due to fast and effective support

“5nine Manager has significantly reduced the time we would spend searching for VMs by 75%. Tasks that would have taken us an hour to carry out before, can now be completed in a fraction of the time. This delivers a major boost in team performance.”

– Ken Enginger, Senior Systems Engineer

5nine Manager has a direct impact on a company’s bottom line by minimizing all the operational expenses for maintaining virtual infrastructures. 5nine Manager also requires no additional infrastructure investments, so companies can get even more out of their IT budgets.

“We showed Cerner just how easy 5nine Manager is to install and manage, the simplification it brings to the Hyper-V environment and the fact that it achieves all this with a light footprint – basically all the things Cerner was looking for,” says Tom Novello, VP of Sales at 5nine.

SAVING TIME, BOOSTING PERFORMANCE

Although Enginger was impressed with 5nine’s demonstration, he couldn’t help worrying about whether the software was going to work the way he wanted it to once implementation was complete. “I shouldn’t have been worried,” he says, “because it has performed exactly the way we hoped it would.”

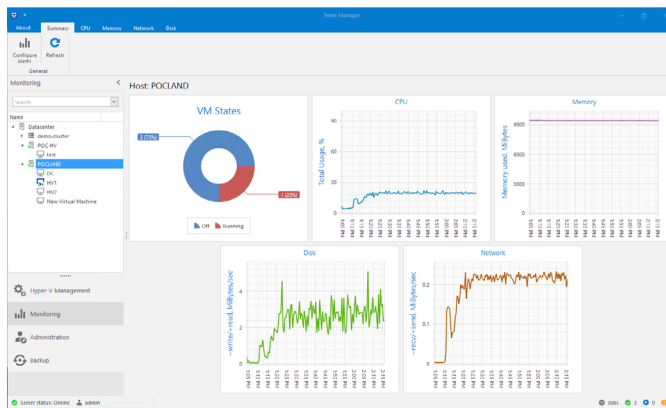


Figure 1: 5nine Manager provides visibility of performance issues by centralizing monitoring across hosts

Arguably the most startling benefit of adopting 5nine Manager is the huge amount of time Enginger has found it has saved him and his team.

“It has reduced the time we would spend searching for VMs by at least 75%,” he reveals. “This delivers a major boost in team

performance, and allows us to keep our IT staffing as lean as possible.”

Decommissioning systems has also been streamlined.

“Now we can simply jump right into 5nine, go ahead and make any kind of modifications to the settings and rename it so we see what systems need to be decommissioned,” explains Enginger. “Whereas before we would decommission a machine and forget about it, now we can carry out a quick search of what systems need to be shut down and when. This makes the process 10 times smoother than it was.”

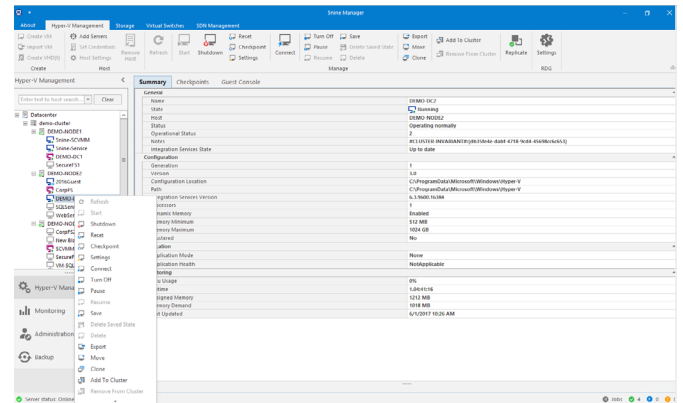


Figure 2: Virtual machine lifecycle management simplifies decommissioning VMs for maintenance

What’s more, if an end user has a problem with their VM, instead of having to go through the documentation to figure out where it is located, Cerner can now use 5nine Manager to conduct a quick search and reboot that machine within seconds. Before this process could have taken as long as 15 minutes. Understandably, this has significantly improved the Cerner user experience.

“Now we also build machines within 5nine. What would once have taken an hour or two to complete we can finish in a fraction of the time,” says Enginger.

“Overall, 5nine Manager gives us a great snapshot of all our Hyper-V systems, and is highly effective and great value in terms of monitoring. Plus the support team has been extremely responsive to our needs. This is essential for avoiding delays in the early days when you’re not too familiar with the software – and of course if any problems pop up going forward. We know we can count on them.”

Implementing 5nine Manager has transformed Cerner’s ability to control its Hyper-V environments.

“This has been achieved through a combination of features, from quick and easy monitoring of VM performance and alerting, as well as efficient lifecycle management and a centralized view of VMs across all hosts,” says Novello.

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