peak 10™

Case Study: **Cloud Services**

AssistRx Reduces IT Costs by 25% in the Cloud

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AssistRx develops cutting-edge software that streamlines processes for prescribing, distributing and administering specialty medications. Pharmaceutical manufacturers rely on AssistRx solutions to navigate a heavily regulated, diverse healthcare ecosystem to securely, accurately and quickly deliver specialty drugs into physicians' hands for patient treatment.

Website: assistrx.com

Industry: Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals

Results:
- HIPAA compliance
- Migration of 150 servers in 45 days
- 25-30% reduction in monthly operating costs
- Improved performance and reliability

The Challenge

Business growth plans, industry demands and customer expectations were straining the technology systems AssistRx developed and implemented during its early years. Like many new ventures, after a few years AssistRx needed different talents, management experience and supporting IT systems in order to transition from start-up to enterprise mode.

Lawrence Brown joined AssistRx as the vice president of IT in early 2014. He inherited an infrastructure split between colocation at one vendor's facility and cloud services at another. Issues of platform standardization, security, performance, compliance, inflexibility and aging technology all had to be addressed. Not finding much support from current vendors, Brown created a plan that called for centralizing new production systems into a colocation facility and re-architecting everything from a LAMP, an archetypal model of web service solution stacks, to Microsoft.

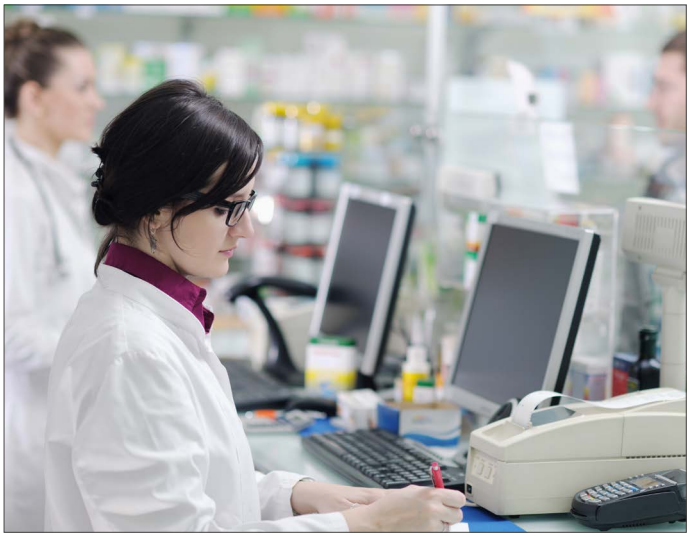
"AssistRx needed different supporting IT systems to transition from start-up to enterprise mode."

Then the opportunity to win the largest pharmaceutical company client in AssistRx's history called for a change of plan. The deal hinged on the company's ability to provide new infrastructure, demonstrate regulatory compliance, ensure data security and protection — and do it in 60 days. Brown believed a cloud approach was the answer to winning this important business and taking AssistRx to its next level of growth.

Peak 10 and the incumbent were among the several cloud service providers contacted for proposals. Besides the accelerated timetable, the challenge included migrating delicate legacy production systems to a new robust infrastructure with the attendant security, control, HIPAA compliance and performance necessary to meet contractual milestones.

The Peak 10 Solution

AssistRx's Brown selected Peak 10 due to its hands-on style, comprehensive security and compliance capabilities, world-class infrastructure and approach to consultative client service. In order to meet the 2014 year-end deadline, Peak 10 needed to migrate legacy production workloads, which were on multiple configurations of operating systems and LAMP tools, and place a security blanket on top of them. Re-architecting to a Microsoft platform would be addressed later. What AssistRx received was much more.



"When we told management what we planned to do and how much money it would save us, they were skeptical," said Brown. "They didn't see how so much could be accomplished in such a short time."

Peak 10 proposed a VMware cluster in a virtual private cloud provisioned on a standardized, technologically current platform and subject to a change-management process. Peak 10 technology partner SilverSky handled the security aspects. Another partner with advanced Linux skills, Apparatus, managed the migration of mission-critical workloads, which would sit on top of this highly secure infrastructure. With this implementation AssistRx could migrate 150 servers over to a HIPAA-compliant infrastructure.

"The Peak 10 team brought together the resources we needed to get this done, and that was a key differentiator" said Brown. "They also arranged for a third-party assessment to document that Peak 10's cloud infrastructure was HIPAA compliant, which was essential to winning the new account. Instead of 60 days, we completed this much more aggressive plan in just 45 days, well ahead of schedule, which impressed our customer as well as our company leadership."

With the help of Peak 10, Brown was able to make sure that AssistRx had the internal technical and managerial skills and experience necessary from an enterprise perspective to springboard the company to the next level. He completely revamped the IT organization to move aggressively on immediate re-architecting challenges as well as future strategic growth and new business plans.

Results

Nothing matters more to AssistRx than getting specialty medications into the hands of the people who need them most – the patients – as quickly as possible. Technology is the key means by which it succeeds. Doing that better than anyone else is how the company prospers.

Prior to making the decision to centralize all applications in one colocation site and manage it themselves, AssistRx was paying for data center services with one provider, cloud services with another, and hired a managed services consultant to help manage the technology relationships with its providers. By centralizing and standardizing operations on its own, the company would have had to make significant capital expenditures in systems, enterprise-class redundancy and, most importantly, advanced security systems and technology; security appliances alone would have cost approximately $300,000.

The move to Peak 10 eliminated the need for major capital investments. Allowing Peak 10 to handle all IT operations in one of its Charlotte, N.C. data centers — security, networking, storage, back-up, disaster recovery, etc. — reduced the company's costs by 25 to 30 percent compared to prior services expenditures. Furthermore, the company now had the systems and infrastructure to scale operations and grow as it needed. "We don't need to worry. We're better off with Peak 10," said Brown.

Compared to before, performance and reliability have improved, according to Brown. End users get more stable, scalable and secure technology systems. The standardized platform allows new servers to be spun up quickly in a high-integrity and compliant environment.

"End users get more stable, scalable and secure technology systems"

"When a customer receives FDA approval on a new treatment, we need to act immediately to get it into the hands of healthcare professionals and the patients who desperately need it," said Brown.

Not only did AssistRx meet its commitments to its new customer. It set itself up to meet demanding requirements of all its customers, current and future, as well as its own healthcare-industry future.

- **HIPAA compliance**
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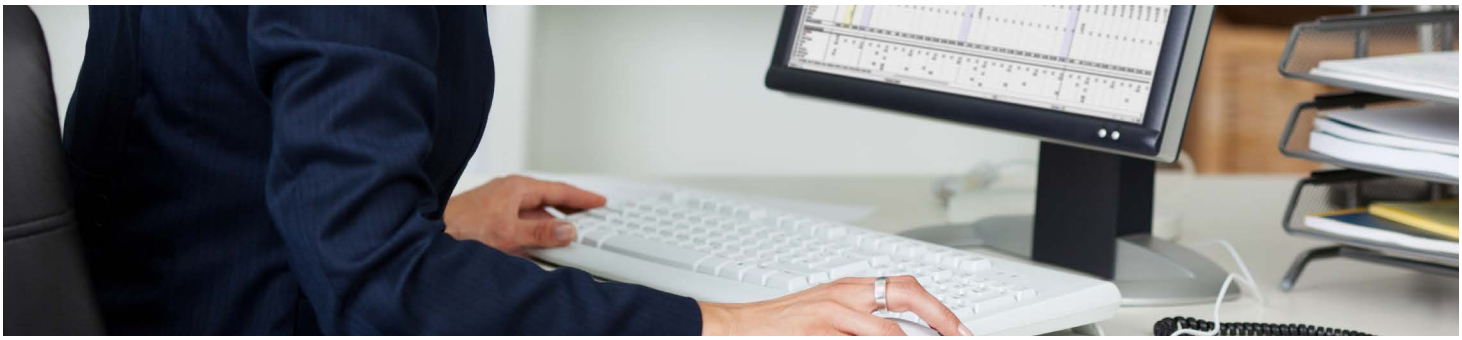
- **25-30% reduction in operating costs**
- **Improved performance and reliability**



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About Peak 10

Peak 10 provides IT infrastructure solutions that ensure the 24/7/365 availability and security of our customers' critical data and applications. Customer-centric and cost-competitive, Peak 10 solutions are designed to scale and adapt to customers' changing business needs, enabling them to increase agility, lower costs, improve performance and focus internal resources on their core competencies — all while maintaining uptime, access and security.

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