IT Provider Expands SMB Business, Gives Customers More Flexibility with Server Solution

Overview

Country or Region: Germany
Industry: Professional services—IT services

Partner Profile

TrinityComputer.de provides technology management and hosting services to small and midsize businesses across Germany. It is based in Detmold, Germany, and has five employees.

Business Situation

Many TrinityComputer.de customers have outdated technology but shy away from investing in a server because of cost and perceived complexity. They are intrigued with cloud computing but worry about losing control of their data.

Solution

TrinityComputer.de presents Windows Server 2012 Essentials on an HP ProLiant MicroServer as the ideal first-server solution and a way for small businesses to use virtualization.

Benefits

- Grow business with first-server and hosting opportunities
- Give customers more flexibility and lower costs
- Increase customer loyalty and trust

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> Oliver Sommer, Senior Consultant, TrinityComputer.de

TrinityComputer.de serves small and midsize businesses across Germany and is always looking for technology that gives customers enterprise-caliber capabilities at small-business prices. It found such a solution in Windows Server 2012 Essentials, which provides file and print services, data backup and restoration, remote access, and the ability to easily add virtualization and cloud services. By offering Windows Server 2012 Essentials on the HP ProLiant MicroServer, TrinityComputer.de can grow its business by pursuing opportunities in the first-server and hosting markets. It can also give customers unprecedented flexibility in configuring technology solutions that precisely meet their needs. Recommending flexible, customizable, affordable solutions increases customer trust and loyalty, which is critical to the long-term business success of TrinityComputer.de.

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Situation

TrinityComputer.de provides technology guidance, management, and hosting services to small and midsize businesses across Germany. As a member of the Microsoft Partner Network, it also supports other Microsoft partners on Windows Small Business Server, Microsoft Exchange Server, Hyper-V clustering, and other topics regarding the use of Microsoft products in a small-business setting.

Many TrinityComputer.de customers still run Windows Small Business Server 2003 or Windows Small Business Server 2008, integrated software products that include operating system, email, collaboration, remote access, file and print sharing, and other capabilities. However, the software and associated servers are outdated and often unreliable. Customers have encountered stability problems and find that they cannot do things that their competitors can do or that their customers require, such as provide highly available email messaging or use newer software programs. Also, Windows Small Business Server includes Microsoft Exchange Server and Windows SharePoint Services, which many small businesses do not need to run on-premises even though they often need to access data remotely.

"Many of our customers are eager to move off older technology to the next new thing, but they don't want to spend a lot of money," says Oliver Sommer, Senior Consultant at TrinityComputer.de. "Windows Small Business Server is a flexible product, but it includes enterprise-caliber capabilities that require high levels of maintenance and drive up costs for small businesses. We typically put these customers on a maintenance contract, which costs at least €300 [US$400] a month—a lot for a company with a handful of employees."

Many TrinityComputer.de customers have heard about cloud computing and hosted IT services and are impressed by the cost savings promised by such options. But they are not happy with the hosting services available from large providers; they worry about losing their data and losing control over their data. They also worry that if a problem occurs, they will be considered a low priority.

Other customers are too small to justify even one server, although they need the same reliability, security, performance, and remote access capabilities that large businesses have. "I knew what the ideal solution for my very small customers might look like in terms of hardware and software, but there was really nothing on the market that fit the bill," Sommer says. "Our customers trust us to set them up with the right technology, and it disappointed me to not have the perfect solution for each customer."

Solution

TrinityComputer.de found that perfect solution in the Windows Server 2012 Essentials operating system, the replacement for Windows Small Business Server that integrates remote access, file and print sharing, data backup and restoration, and other core server capabilities in one package. TrinityComputer.de signed up for the Microsoft Technology Adoption Program (TAP) for Windows Server 2012 Essentials and also enrolled several of its customers.

In Sommer's view, Windows Server 2012 Essentials provides much more flexibility than Windows Small Business Server. "Windows Server 2012 Essentials does not include Exchange Server and SharePoint Services, and this is a plus for many of our customers who don't need those products," he says. "With Essentials, we can give them

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the choice of using an on-premises Exchange Server, hosted Exchange Server, Microsoft Office 365, or some other messaging solution." Office 365 is perfect for small businesses, and a great companion to Windows Server 2012 Essentials, because it gives them instant online access to email messaging, collaboration, instant messaging, and productivity software for an affordable monthly subscription.

TrinityComputer.de can also host Windows Server 2012 Essentials for customers who cannot run an on-premises server because of cost or space constraints. This enables very small businesses to reap the benefits of server computing—the ability to run line-of-business applications faster and more securely, remote file access capabilities, and higher reliability—without the expense of owning a server.

For customers who need more sophisticated capabilities or more expandability, TrinityComputer.de can pair Windows Server 2012 Essentials with the Windows Server 2012 Standard or Datacenter operating systems, which include Hyper-V virtualization technology. TrinityComputer.de can create multiple virtual machines on the Hyper-V host server and run Windows Server 2012 Essentials, Exchange Server, SharePoint Services, Microsoft SQL Server, other server-grade services, and line-of-business applications.

"Many of the great features that were in Windows Small Business Server, such as file and print services and Remote Web Access, are also in Windows Server 2012 Essentials," Sommer says. "But Essentials contains new features, such as Storage Spaces, client backup, and an improved administrative console, that let us do more for our customers." Storage Spaces is a

feature set that enables customers to use low-cost, industry-standard storage to build highly scalable, continuously available storage solutions.

Also, Windows Server 2012 Essentials typically does not require a maintenance contract; the program monitors its own health and the health of the PCs and servers connected to it, and it notifies TrinityComputer.de if there are issues related to backups or low disk space, for example. With this information, TrinityComputer.de can intervene before a system failure occurs.

TrinityComputer.de uses the HP ProLiant MicroServer for Windows Server 2012 Essentials deployments. The MicroServer is a compact server that contains up to four hard drives, has very low power requirements, and offers an affordable price for small businesses. "We like that the MicroServer is a full server product aimed at the SMB market," Sommer says. "Three and a half years ago, this type of device wasn't available, and we had to deploy a low-power, basic computer for customers who needed small-server capabilities. We recommend the MicroServer for any customer with fewer than five users. The cost is so low that when customers hear our proposal, they are amazed. 'It's cheaper than the laptop I just bought!' they often say. We're amazed because the MicroServer is server-caliber hardware even though it's so small, quiet, and saves a lot on power costs."

Sommer believes that the HP ProLiant MicroServer is a great fit with Windows Server 2012 Essentials, which doesn't require a lot of processing power or huge I/O demands. Customers don't pay for unnecessary hardware, and MicroServers are easy to repair and replace because of their simple design.

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"We like working with HP because it gives us the same level of support for a MicroServer that it provides for a full-blown data center server," Sommer says. "For years, we worked with a wide range of hardware vendors, but we had hardware support problems that caused us to lose customer trust. We have a level of trust with HP that we never had with other vendors."

Benefits

By offering Windows Server 2012 Essentials on the HP ProLiant platform, TrinityComputer.de can solve customer problems and expand its own market opportunities. TrinityComputer.de can help customers transition from outdated technology to new capabilities at a modest cost, while giving them unprecedented flexibility in combining on-premises solutions and hosted services. Helping customers find the perfect technology solution increases customer loyalty and trust, which is critical to the firm's long-term business success.

Grow Business with First-Server and Hosting Opportunities

By adding Windows Server 2012 Essentials to its solution portfolio, TrinityComputer.de can pursue new markets, such as the first-server market, that will drive revenue growth. "We do not know how much our revenues will grow from these additional services, but we do know that Windows Server 2012 Essentials gives us several clear ways to grow our business," Sommer says.

The biggest opportunity is to upgrade the many customers still on various editions of Windows Small Business Server. TrinityComputer.de can also approach customers that never owned a server before and offer them a truly affordable solution. "Windows Server 2012 Essentials is really a game-changer for these

customers and a new way to open up first-server conversations again," Sommer says. "The Essentials-MicroServer combo is a low-cost and low-maintenance solution, because customers don't need a managed services contract. While losing the maintenance revenue stream sounds like a negative for us, we more than make up for it by gaining new customers that we wouldn't have been able to serve before—companies with fewer than five users."

Sommer says that hosting Windows Server 2012 Essentials and other Microsoft products will be another huge opportunity in the next 5 to 10 years. Small businesses that are hesitant to entrust their data to global cloud providers with remote data centers feel more comfortable hosting with a local provider like Trinity. "It's true that global hosting providers can provide far more sophisticated infrastructures than we can, but small businesses perceive that it's very difficult to deal with these large providers and get their attention if something goes wrong," Sommer says. "We are a local phone call away. Customers literally say to me, 'Oliver, we know where you live.' If anything goes wrong, they can call me or our engineers, and they know that we will answer the phone and respond to their problem right away."

Give Customers More Flexibility and Lower Costs

By deploying Windows Server 2012 Essentials on an HP ProLiant MicroServer, TrinityComputer.de can give very small businesses the reliability, security, performance, and application breadth of a server at a very affordable price. It also gives them unprecedented flexibility in configuring their technology. "Windows Server 2012 Essentials gives our customers the flexibility to do almost whatever they want technology-wise," Sommer says. "With the ability to manage cloud services, such

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as Office 365, from the Windows Server 2012 Essentials management dashboard, customers are more comfortable adding those cloud services. They know that even though they are venturing into the cloud, all their technology and data—cloud-based and on-premises—is under one management console and our care."

Customers have the freedom to choose different configurations and services and find the technology platform that's right for their business. They can sign up for Office 365 for messaging and collaboration services. If for some reason they don't like it, they can move to another hosted Exchange Server solution, or vice versa. "This kind of flexibility is very important to small businesses, because they only renew their infrastructure every 5 to 10 years," Sommer says. "Whatever they purchase they are stuck with for a long time, so it's good for that acquisition to give them many different options."

Increase Customer Trust and Loyalty
TrinityComputer.de knows the risks related to recommending an inflexible solution. "If you do that to customers once, you are out of the game," Sommer says. "We cannot do experiments with our customers. With Windows Server 2012 Essentials, if a customer grows beyond the 25-user license limit, they do not lose their investment in Essentials. The customer can easily and cost-effectively bump up to a Windows Server 2012 Standard license, which gives them more room to grow."

With Windows Server 2012 Essentials, TrinityComputer.de can finally deliver features and options that its customers have requested for years—built-in client backups and cost-effective disaster recovery technology, for example. "Offering customers a solution that meets so many needs at such a low price helps build trust

with our customers, because it shows them that we really care about their business and are always looking for ways to help their business run better," Sommer says. "Trust is what will keep us in business for the next 25 years."

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For more information about TrinityComputer.de computer products and services, visit the website at:
www.trinitycomputer.de

Windows Server

Windows Server drives many of the world's largest data centers, empowers small businesses around the world, and delivers value to organizations of all sizes in between. Building on this legacy, Windows Server 2012 redefines the category, delivering hundreds of new features and enhancements spanning virtualization, networking, storage, user experience, cloud computing, automation, and more. Simply put, Windows Server 2012 helps you transform your IT operations to reduce costs and deliver a whole new level of business value.

For more information please visit:
www.microsoft.com/en-us/server-cloud/windows-server/2012-default.aspx

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