



How to perform a Proof of Concept for Virtualisation in your environment

A necessary step for the introduction of virtualisation in your environment should be a structured Proof of Concept. The idea is that during this step you will be able to validate your business requirements, become familiar with the technology and generally prove that the solution will work for the business.

As far as virtualisation goes, there are several points that you need to validate. The technology can bring about the following benefits to a business: greater return on investment, savings on hardware and rack space, ease of management, efficiency in deployment of new servers, zero downtime hardware maintenance and higher SLA's for disaster recovery at a lower cost.

The best way to start is by defining the scope of your proof of concept along with your business drivers. The majority of the virtualisation implementations are based around hardware consolidation or to improved disaster recovery.

1. In the case of consolidation you need to ensure that you can improve the utilisation of existing servers after consolidating functions and roles to virtualised systems. This consolidation will have to be seamless to the end-user.
2. In the case of disaster recovery you need to improve existing SLA numbers and reduce any Single Points of Failure. Virtual machines can play the role of "hot stand-by" systems and in the case of a disaster, these systems can be started to become the "live" production systems within a short amount of time.

The deliverables of the proof of concept should be adequate to substantiate the business case and provide answers to possible questions around the new technology. A proper proof of concept should mimic production systems with real data and additionally, should provide draft project plans for implementation, deliver documentation required for the business case and provide details of the changes/improvements to Disaster Recovery processes and Risk Management procedure.

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