

TOO RISKY TO WAIT

HOW HAWKINS GRAVES LEFT VMWARE FOR GOOD

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Hawkins-Graves is a construction equipment, supplies rental, sales and service company operating throughout Virginia. Their operations depend on a stable IT environment to manage inventory, rentals, financial data, scheduling, and communication between teams. Their server must host Active Directory, file services, and line-of-business applications, tying infrastructure reliability directly to business continuity.

Situation Summary

The business' critical systems were running on a VMWare ESXi server and due to changes in VMWare licensing, increasingly risky to maintain in its current configuration. Maintenance, support, upgrades, and security under the new model quickly became an expensive ordeal. They decided that a transition to a more modern, unified, and cost-effective platform was necessary - and it had to be completed within a tightly controlled maintenance window.

Key Factors:

- Single-host VMware environment:** All production systems ran on a single ESXi host, increasing the complexity of the migration and raising the stakes for downtime if there was an issue.
- Unhealthy Active Directory:** It was discovered that AD could not be safely migrated, making a clean rebuild mid-migration the most reliable path to success.
- Rising VMware costs:** Broadcom's licensing changes introduced significant expense for small deployments virtually overnight. Doing nothing was not an option.
- Security and support limitations:** The ESXi version in place was approaching end-of-life and Broadcom stopped offering updates.
- Business continuity constraints:** All this presented challenges for recovery options and increased the impact of any future failure. Without a supported infrastructure, a server failure would immediately become a catastrophe.
- Tight maintenance window:** The work needed to happen in a single planned downtime period. There was no room for a migration path that would slow operations in any way.
- A delicate mission-critical application stack:** The line-of-business database required extra care. Connectivity through a single Remote Desktop Services server meant any misstep during migration could cause a complete operational outage.

Project Goals

- Migrate from VMWare ESXi to Microsoft Hyper-V on the same existing physical server without new hardware.
- Preserve all application servers, settings, and file data so the transition is seamless for end users.
- Rebuild Active Directory on a new Domain Controller to create a healthy, stable foundation.
- Execute the entire migration within a single maintenance window with minimal downtime and no operational impacts.
- Deliver a best-practices, supported, and fully documented server environment, positioned for long-term success and stability.
- Ensure the environment aligns with Microsoft's licensing requirements for predictable maintenance and costs moving forward.



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Migration without the migraines.

THE SOLUTION

Hawkins-Graves needed a stable, modern server platform without expensive licensing fees and without disrupting daily operations. In a single planned maintenance window, their entire infrastructure was rebuilt, stabilized, and moved onto a cost-effective foundation that will support the business for years to come.

A Clean Migration Path Forward

The VMware environment was transitioned to Microsoft Hyper-V on the same physical server. No expensive licenses, no new server infrastructure, and no loss of performance.

Active Directory, Rebuilt the Right Way

Active Directory can be a beast - especially if it isn't properly managed and maintained. We rebuilt AD on a new DC, repaired it, and restored stability to authentication, group policies, and access across the environment all within the same maintenance window.

Applications and Data, Fully Preserved

The database server and line-of-business application - critical systems that drive day-to-day operations - were migrated with extreme care. All configurations, permissions, and user profiles were maintained so staff had no idea anything had been done.

Remote Desktop, Seamless and Intact

The Remote Desktop Services environment that every user relies on was migrated without interruption. Staff logged in the next business day exactly as they always had, without re-training or workflow changes.

A Modern, Supportable Server Platform

Hyper-V, Windows Server, and proper domain structure now provide a clean foundation with predictable licensing, clear documentation, and far better supportability. Backups remained intact and fully functional, ensuring continuity moving forward.

All Completed in a Single Maintenance Window

The entire rebuild—Active Directory, hypervisor migration, application validation, and server reconfiguration—was completed in one coordinated weekend session. Hawkins-Graves avoided prolonged downtime, multi-week transition cycles, and the uncertainty of stretched-out projects.

THE RESULTS

Stability, reliability, and long-term confidence

Since the migration, Hawkins-Graves has gained:

- A stable, modern server platform
- Faster, more predictable performance
- A clean, healthy Active Directory foundation
- A seamless Remote Desktop experience
- Reduced licensing costs and long-term support
- Stronger continuity options and recovery path
- An environment easier to maintain and scale

Most importantly, the company now operates without the underlying instability and licensing uncertainty that had been building up.

WHY IT MATTERS

Hawkins-Graves' situation isn't unique. Many businesses run in a nearly identical way.

What makes this project stand out is how quickly a high-risk, single-point-of-failure environment can be stabilized when the work is done methodically and with the right expertise.

Hermetic didn't just migrate a server - we gave the business a modern, reliable platform that reduces risk, controls costs, and supports their operations.

About Hermetic Networks

Hermetic Networks has been helping small and midsize businesses achieve stability, security, and simplicity in their IT for over 20 years. From cloud migrations to cybersecurity, we combine technical excellence with genuine care for our clients' success.

Managed IT Services & Support

- Cloud Infrastructure Management
- Project Planning & Implementation
- Backup & Continuity
- Onsite & Remote Support

Cybersecurity & Compliance

- Identity & Access Management
- Email & Data Security
- Cybersecurity Training & Assessment
- Regulatory Compliance Support