CloudHealth by VMware creates a single view of cloud activity. Reports on 62 cloud environments in 12 countries are now consolidated into one

CloudHealth by VMware has enabled Discovery to reduce spending by 40 percent

Reports are now generated on demand, rather than days

Discovery Takes Smart Approach to Cloud as it Pursues Global Growth

Discovery Limited is an insurance and financial services company based in South Africa and with operations worldwide. By adopting CloudHealth by VMware® and VMware Secure State™, Discovery is now more efficient and effective in the way it secures and manages its multiple cloud environments. By being able to mitigate risks and make more informed decisions around cloud, the business is better able to accelerate its digital transformation and explore new opportunities worldwide.

Improving efficiency through cloud adoption

Discovery's core purpose is to make people healthier and enhance and protect their lives. It does this by making customers aware of their health risk factors and helping them make better decisions around health choices.

"We base our products around actuarial data and values," says Johan Marais, senior platform services manager, Discovery Group. "The insight we find in people's behavior helps us model new services. Our customers' data is of the utmost importance."

The business operates worldwide. It wants to be faster to move on new opportunities, to introduce new services, and to scale up when demand is evident. Discovery began its cloud journey in 2012, recognizing the need for scale, flexibility and global reach. Building out on-premise infrastructure in every global location was impractical, slow and unaffordable.

Discovery

Discovery is a South African-founded financial services organization that operates in the healthcare, life assurance, short-term insurance, savings and investment and wellness markets. Since inception, Discovery has been guided by a clear core purpose – to make people healthier and to enhance and protect their lives. This has manifested in its globally recognized Vitality Shared-Value insurance model, which is now active in 22 countries.
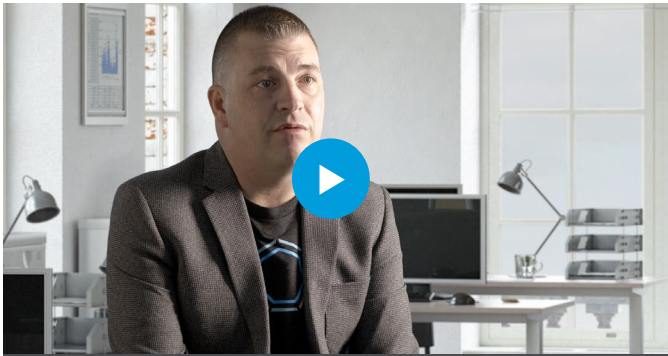
INDUSTRY
Financial Services

LOCATION
Sandton, South Africa

VMWARE FOOTPRINT
CloudHealth by VMware
VMware Secure State

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LEARN HOW DISCOVERY TAKES SMART APPROACH TO CLOUD

AWS is the favored cloud provider, with local AWS accounts in action worldwide, though other providers are tolerated. Within the past 12 months the company has doubled its AWS spend and accelerated cloud adoption across the enterprise in a move to maintain flexibility and maintain market leadership.

With a team of six people managing over 9,000 servers, daily operations proved to be very challenging. The concern was the team was at risk of losing track of key operations.

Business was accelerating at a pace that the team couldn't possibly manage alone, says Pierre Meyer, head of platform at Discovery: "Operations around maintaining good posture in the cloud became much harder. Business was moving quicker than what we could manage."

The business wanted to simplify the management of its cloud landscape, improving reporting and providing a single view of all cloud activity. Where there were issues, it wanted to be faster to take action. The move would also improve its security and governance posture.

"We have an attitude here that we can build things from the ground up. We're a lean, agile team, and we move at pace," says Marais. "It's important we free up people's time, so we can focus on new projects. We want to be more efficient in the way we deal with the day to day things."

Leveraging the CloudHealth operating platform

Through a single pane of glass, the CloudHealth by VMware multi-cloud reporting infrastructure enhances the transparency of cloud usage and its overall impact on cost, performance and scalability.

In addition, VMware Secure State takes a fundamentally different approach to public cloud security. It improves visibility, the speed and sophistication of vulnerability, updating in near real-time to understand both the direct and correlated risks of change.

"CloudHealth by VMware provides a centralized, standardized view of our cloud activity, then VMware Secure State comes in from the side and tells us how compliant our security posture is," says Marais.

CloudHealth analyzes asset performance metrics to help Discovery visualize and correct underutilized resources. Cloudhealth's Cost Report and RI Exchanger give Discovery a holistic view of cost savings across all accounts, simplifying the reporting process. The business can then identify opportunities to reduce costs based on reserved instance usage trends. To further help Marais' team, CloudHealth enables customized, automated policies to identify immediate cost saving opportunities and take corrective action.

Other options were considered, says Marais: "The biggest thing for us was, because we were already a consumer of VMware solutions, we could see more integration coming down the line."

Discovery has high expectations of its vendors, he continues. It is important that solutions are up and running quickly, with a clear idea of ROI.

"There are a lot of players in the cloud space, lots of free and open source tool sets. However, do we really want to deal with another vendor and another engagement model? VMware was a natural fit; we understood the value of CloudHealth by VMware; we didn't have to reinvent the account."

"CloudHealth by VMware, for the first time, creates a single view of our cloud activity, across multiple territories. We're no longer hunting for information. It's all there at the click of a button."

JOHAN MARAIS
SENIOR PLATFORM SERVICES MANAGER
DISCOVERY GROUP

Accelerating digital transformation

Discovery is now more efficient and effective in the way it manages its multiple cloud environments. By being able to make more informed decisions around cloud, the business is better able to accelerate its digital transformation and to explore new opportunities worldwide.

While Discovery's investment in cloud has doubled over 2018-19, says Marais, costs are down 40 percent due to more effective management and reduction of waste. Reports are generated on demand, rather than days as previous, and there is a clear sense of how cloud is being used. Automation means Discovery avoids the need to employ two new FTEs to manage reporting and security.

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"CloudHealth by VMware, for the first time, creates a single view of our cloud activity, across multiple territories," says Marais. "We're no longer hunting for information. It's all there at the click of a button."

This strengthens the link between operations and security teams, he says, establishing a single version of truth. Reports on 62 cloud environments in 12 countries are now consolidated into one.

Efficiency is wonderful, he continues, but it's data security and industry compliance that are most critical to the business.

"Again, we now have a single view, which helps us understand how good or bad we are in different parts of the world. VMware Secure State not only identifies any potential issues, but it also ranks them in order of risk. It means we're more effective in focusing our attention on the most critical risks."
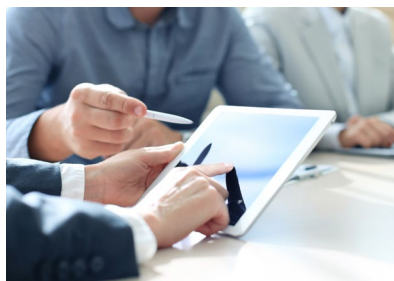
For any business, with the pressure to grow quickly, or get new applications to market before the competition, the temptation is to cut corners. VMware Secure State allows the team to visualize security posture, see how different objects are connected and then prioritize all issues based on risk. The object graph in particular tells you how big the problem is, and makes it easier for all stakeholders to quickly get on the same page, says Marais: "CloudHealth by VMware discovers all different configurations, then VMware Secure State tells us the risk factors in the event of any changes. Because it's event-based we're notified immediately. It's almost like we're self-healing our cloud space in real-time."

Looking ahead

Cloud will continue to provide Discovery with the best means to scale and move quickly as it expands worldwide. Marais says, thanks to CloudHealth, the future will see more informed decisions as to the best cloud environment for different projects and different territories.

"We can tie together cost, security and performance in a single view, and make the right decision. Each cloud provider is unique, they all have their advantages. What we see in VMware is a business that is on the same journey as us. It's a great comfort to us that VMware is aligned on security and transparency issues."

@Discovery_SA takes smart approach to cloud as it pursues global growth with CloudHealth by @VMware