

A background image showing several blue and white capsules scattered on a light blue surface. In the upper left corner, there is a faint, stylized molecular structure with white spheres and connecting lines.

PRESCRIBING EFFICIENCY AT ONE OF INDIA'S FASTEST GROWING PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES

How Dell Technologies and GBB helped NATCO Pharma achieve seamless modernization with the implementation of VxRail

Adopting growth as a standard operating procedure

Today, as one of the fastest growing pharmaceutical companies in India, NATCO Pharma began operations in Hyderabad in 1981 with an initial investment of INR 3.3 million. From a single unit of operations with 20 employees, today NATCO has seven manufacturing facilities spread across the country with dedicated modern research laboratories and capabilities in new drug development. With their exponential growth, the NATCO Pharma family now consists of 5000 employees and is well recognized for its innovation in pharmaceutical R&D.

Mr. M Prabhakar Rao, Associate Vice President at NATCO Pharma, is a veteran IT leader in the Indian pharma industry, and he has been the driving force behind the digital transformation of the company.

Calibrating the problem

In early 2019, while Mr. Rao was evaluating the IT infrastructure to modernize the Kothur site — one of the seven facilities of NATCO, he found that the older generation 3-tier IT infrastructure was having constraints in terms of scaling up and resilience.

The performance issues at the Kothur facility triggered Mr. Rao to start looking at various options to solve the inefficiencies in operations. He was aware that the hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) was quickly becoming commonplace in the pharmaceutical industry.

This idea was discussed internally with Dr. B R Reddy — Director FDF, who always welcomes change for the better. A joint presentation was done by Dell Technologies, VMware, and the scientific application vendor team to all the stakeholders. The idea was principally agreed upon, following which

Mr. DVV Satyanarayana — Manager (IT) from the Corporate Team and Mr. N Ashok — Manager, IT — Kothur plant, discussed and worked on the architecture, data life cycle from creation to backup and archive, verified the architecture from all internal and external stakeholders, and sized it for present and future in tandem with the compliance requirements.

After several deliberations, Mr. Rao was convinced that he needed to modernize his existing infrastructure. For which he appointed Dell Technologies and Gowra Bits & Bytes — the partners he had worked with earlier during the successful VDI deployment at NATCO Pharma's Vishakhapatnam facility using similar HCI technology. NATCO Pharma had experienced strong quantifiable benefits of this exercise, and it gave him the confidence to involve the same team again.

True to form, Mr. Rao was committed to ensuring that the highest levels of process documentation and compliance were also to be followed at NATCO Pharma, in line with its reputation as a responsible organization.

Prescribing the right solution

NATCO Pharma, as part of their IT modernization plan, wanted to evaluate various solutions on a comprehensive 5-parameter matrix: scalability, agility, data security, availability, and more importantly, a future road map for the solution to avoid bottlenecks and better return on investments.

Discussions on the requirement and implementation started in July 2019 and focused on core requirements, RAM, the amount of storage backup, and the type of backup — tape or disk.

This required collective inputs and efforts from all stakeholders — scientific application vendors, end-users, business leaders, the quality assurance team, and the IT team under the leadership of Mr. Rao. To gain a better understanding of how the solution must be implemented, the project teams at Dell Technologies, VMware, GBB, and the scientific application vendor team engaged in a site visit and proposed the benefits of VxRail to all the stakeholders. Additionally, the team from the existing scientific application vendor shared their experience with other similar projects, implications of HCI solutions, and compliance-related

guidelines. Dell Technologies and VMware presented the solution that meets the 5 parameters of the evaluation and GBB shared their deployment plan covering the solution implementation plan. With all these factors in mind, the Dell EMC VxRail powered by VMware vSAN technology was deemed as the best possible solution for Natco Pharma. The proposed HCI solution, was highly scalable, agile, and furthermore, would also cover the compliance norms of US FDA 21 CFR Part 11 and other pharmaceutical-related compliances. Above all, the scientific application that was part of NATCO's IT infrastructure could also seamlessly function on the proposed VxRail solution.



"I was always keen on the benefits that virtualization can provide for our organization. With the technologies in the pharmaceutical industry rapidly evolving, I knew that bringing this evolution at NATCO Pharma was a step in the right direction and with the help and support of the teams from Dell Technologies, VMware, and GBB, we were able to maintain our future-readiness"

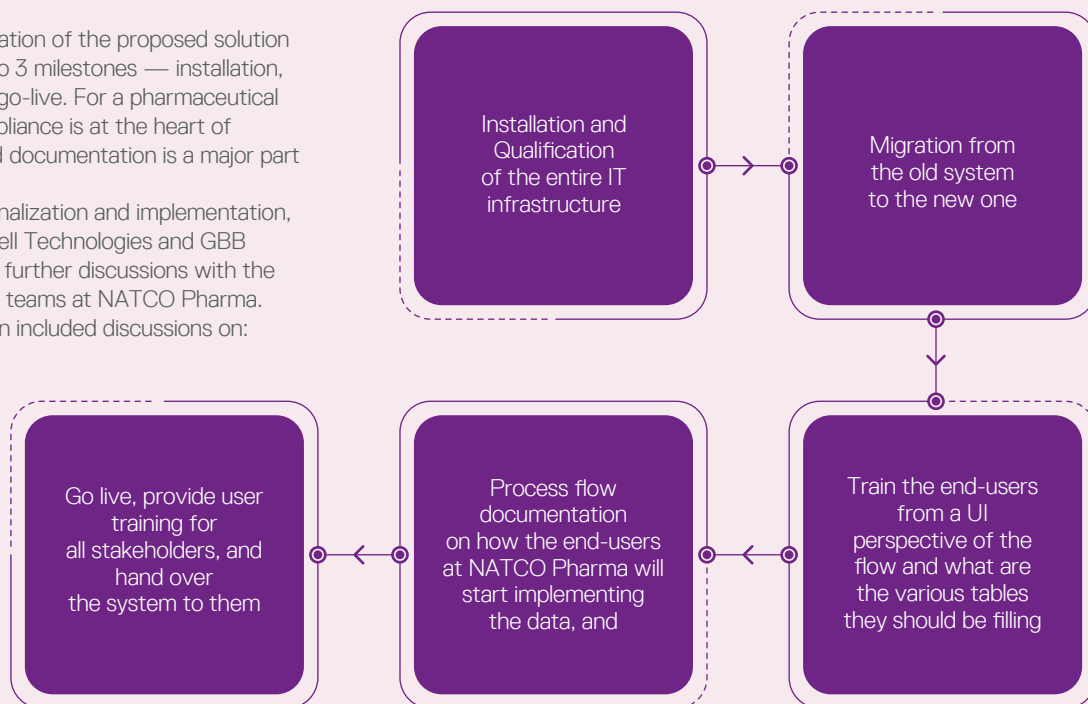
M Prabhakar Rao

Associate Vice President – IT & IS
NATCO Pharma

Implementing a homogeneous solution

The implementation of the proposed solution was divided into 3 milestones — installation, migration, and go-live. For a pharmaceutical company, compliance is at the heart of everything, and documentation is a major part of compliance.

Between the finalization and implementation, the teams at Dell Technologies and GBB carried on with further discussions with the QA, QC, and IT teams at NATCO Pharma. The project plan included discussions on:



All these discussions and practices were vetted and approved by the NATCO QA team.

The responsiveness of Dell Technologies to queries and the process documentation expertise of GBB was a major point of success during this whole exercise. GBB, as

an implementation partner, played a massive role in identifying and understanding the flow of data — how the data is written, how it flows into the functional system, and then back to the IT hardware, and finally how it is stored at various levels.

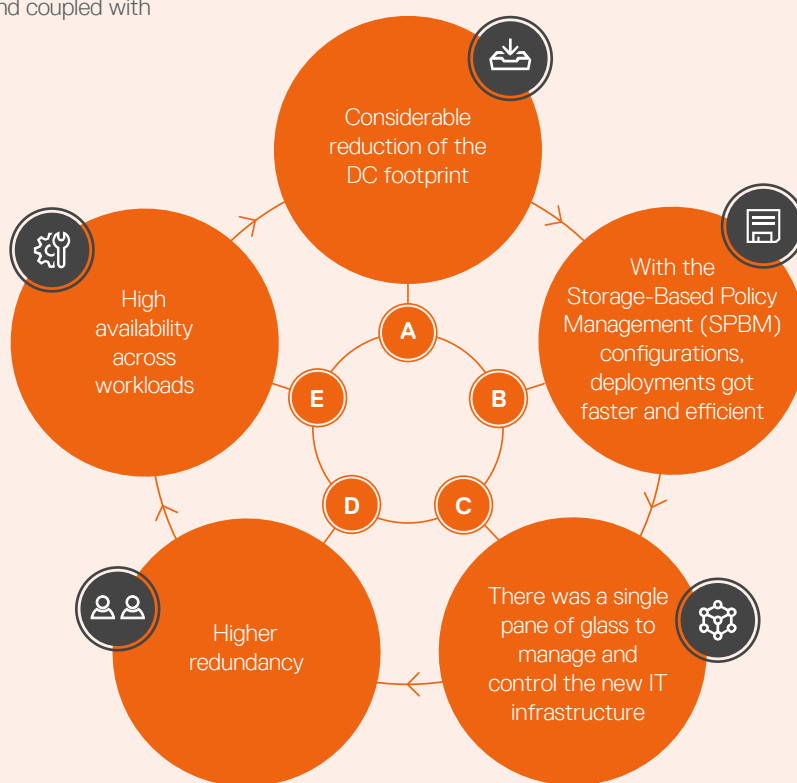
Above all, the challenge of process

documentation required close monitoring as it has to be done during the implementation process. Dell Technologies and GBB's prior expertise in the pharmaceutical industry was another major success factor during the implementation process.

Compounding benefits

The proposed VxRail solution is unique in its ability to manage multiple virtualizations at once. With all these factors in mind, the Dell EMC VxRail, powered by VMware vSAN technology, was deemed as the best possible solution for Natco Pharma. This was a huge benefit for the organization and coupled with

the ability to be managed remotely has added great value to the implementation as a whole. As Mr. Rao had envisioned, the VxRail HCI solution had instantaneously benefitted them. The key benefits were:



“Virtualization in the GxP environment is a new concept for us. When we discussed it, we understood that we could utilize its intended features to increase IT productivity, efficiency, agility, and responsiveness for critical workloads. We could also exploit this for faster provisioning of applications and resources by developing internal procedures. This solution met our expectations and our future requirements. It also helped us to fulfill regulatory requirements by enabling its features such as High Availability, Scalability, and Reliability, etc.”

Dr. B R Reddy

Director (FDF)
NATCO Pharma



“Beyond all the benefits our solutions provide, our main goal is to add value to our customer's business activities. This can be achieved by providing a solution that is scalable, agile, secure, and have high availability. Furthermore, teaming up with our partners at GBB added great value as they were able to seamlessly navigate through the documentation process while adhering to the norms of all compliance regulations.”

Manish Gupta

Senior Director – DCS India Sales
Dell Technologies

A cure for all ailments

The implementation was a huge success. All the parties involved are satisfied with the new IT infrastructure in place and the Kothur site is now able to handle workloads efficiently while delivering the best results and achieving an effective ROI with this exercise. Mr. Rao is a delighted man and is now looking to replicate this model for a centralized, efficient, and highly available IT infrastructure for other critical workloads, making this implementation a huge success for all stakeholders involved.



“It was of immense importance for NATCO Pharma to adhere to all compliances, especially those concerning the documentation process. The note of confidence from the NATCO Pharma leadership team and the trust we built throughout the entire implementation process was the key to the successful deployment of this solution.”

Subbaram Gowra

Managing Director
Gowra Bits & Bytes

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