



American Society for
Clinical Pathology

CASE STUDY

**DISCOVER HOW THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
FOR CLINICAL PATHOLOGY (ASCP)
TRANSFORMED ITS OUTDATED ON-PREM
DATA CENTER SETUP WITH SUMMIT,
IMPRESSING EVEN THE MOST SEASONED
INFRASTRUCTURE PROFESSIONAL.**

A CASE STUDY BY

SUMMIT

AMERICAN SOCIETY

COMPANY:

American Society for Clinical Pathology

DESCRIPTION:

The American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) is the world's largest professional organization for pathologists and laboratory professionals, dedicated to advancing excellence in laboratory medicine through education, certification, and advocacy.

INDUSTRY:

Healthcare and Medical Professional Service

SUMMIT PRODUCTS:

Colocation, VMware Licensing, Cloud Migration

CASE STUDY



Everyone promised Kirk Price a state-of-the-art data center.

“When you own 40 data centers, you know what a good data center looks like and you know what a bad data center looks like,” says Price, referencing his time as Director of Infrastructure for a casino behemoth. He brought that critical eye with him as he looked to relocate an on-prem setup in his new role as Director of Infrastructure for the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP). Data center after data center failed to live up to its promises. Until Summit.

“Summit impressed me when I didn’t think I could be impressed by a data center,” says Price. One year — and one global software outage — since, we’re glad to say he is still impressed.

WHEN YOU LIVE OR DIE BY YOUR CHOICE, CHOOSE SUMMIT

When Price came into his new role at the ASCP, he inherited an on-prem situation no one wanted and a directive to get it out of the building. Leadership had originally assumed everything would move to public cloud, but as Price started to dig into what was actually on the servers, he realized that was a long way off. “If I had taken this straight to the public cloud I would have been looking for another job,” says Price. “No one knew prod from dev, or even what servers were still in use.”

And there wasn’t exactly time to figure it out — only two servers out of 10 racks of servers weren’t end-of-life when Price came on. The state of ASCP’s on-prem setup was summed up in a still-running DNS server from Solaris, a company that had been out of business for more than a decade.

A standard lift-and-shift to cloud was not an option, but Price’s boss gave him the blessing to solve the problem however he saw fit — with a vague threat attached:



My boss said 'This is your decision, you live or die by what you choose.'

— Director of Infrastructure, ASCP



So Price set about fact finding. “I kicked hundreds of tires,” he says of his search for the right data center provider. He knew what he wanted to see, and he wasn’t getting it from the competition. Then he met with a few of the experts at Summit and experienced that unexpected feeling of surprise.

“Everything I looked for was already taken care of,” says Price. “I know how difficult it is to promise 100% of anything, and Summit promises 100% on power. The way the power grid has been designed is phenomenal, on the cooling side, you’re adding on top of that. Every data center looks to be very clean — Summit’s is beyond clean.”

Price was impressed to see things like redundancy built in, not treated as optional add-ons. “A lot of people tend to make redundancy the customer’s problem. “Summit is sitting there with stuff in waiting, spending the time every single day to make sure that equipment is ready to be plugged in,” explains Price. “That’s almost unheard of.”

For Price, too, it was a matter of pride. As a fellow professional, he could tell that our approach went way beyond ticking boxes. “Summit is really doing it the right way because they want to do it the right way.”



GETTING OUT OF THE DATA CENTER BUSINESS FOR GOOD

Having made the choice to work with Summit, Price had to get moving before anything else in the on-prem setup could falter. The first step was tedious, but necessary. Price and his team went to each server, asking what every program actually did for the business. More often than not, the answer was nothing. “I had 440 servers on-prem,” says Price. “I migrated 175 to Summit.”

The migration process created Summit’s first opportunity to save ASCP money. The team clocked an expiring VMware license and jumped in to get Price and his team a renewal at a better rate. **“We saved money by ending up at Summit,”** says Price. “Those are the things they look at.”



Moving to modern servers with more capacity and new technologies was a bit of a shock to ASCP's staff:



People were used to pressing a button and having a report generate in 10 minutes. Instead, they pressed the button and instantly got a result.

— Director of Infrastructure, ASCP



Summit's setup was so fast that old code started to break — just as Price had predicted. He and his team had to make updates just to run at modern speeds.



It's not like Summit gave me the fastest thing in the world. You didn't oversell me. We just went from not even crawling to running.

— Director of Infrastructure, ASCP



SURVIVING A GLOBAL SOFTWARE OUTAGE WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT

Unfortunately, a bit of old code wouldn't be the only problem Price and his team had to face. When a flaw in CrowdStrike's code took pretty much the whole Windows-running world down, ASCP was hurt, too. As a membership organization, it couldn't send renewals, provide classes, or offer certifications — its three main sources of revenue. With registration increasing in advance of a big annual conference, any downtime translated to lost dollars.

"It would probably have been a \$50,000 to \$100,000 event. And we're a nonprofit," says Price. With 15 systems down, including their largest one, he and his team braced for the worst.



It took Summit an hour and 15 minutes to get us back online, including the time it took to see it in the queue. We would have been out for a week without Summit.

— Director of Infrastructure, ASCP



For us at Summit, that was a given, but for Price, it came as a surprise. “I can’t say it any better than this: Summit treats us like a million-dollar client.” Because ASCP is a relatively small, relatively static company (there are only so many new pathologists each year), Price didn’t expect to have his CrowdStrike issue resolved until after our biggest clients. He assumed Summit would be thrown into disarray like the rest of the world, for his outage to be the last thing solved.

“That’s one thing I really love about Summit,” says Price.



You guys treat us like we’re covering an entire data center, when we’re not filling up even a quarter of a rack.

— Director of Infrastructure, ASCP



A “CLOUD-ISH” FUTURE, WHERE NO BUSINESS EVER HAS TO RUN ITS OWN DATA CENTER

While the original idea was to end up on public cloud at some point, the service from Summit has Price and his team reconsidering just how much to move. “It’s reversing a little,” says Price. “We’re actually thinking about pulling cloud to Summit.”

Cloud-as-a-Service will always have its place, and Price plans to use it anywhere it will benefit ASCP. Rearchitecting software to take advantage of cloud takes time, however, and during that time, Price is glad to know he has a solid backbone keeping everything going.

The shape of ASCP’s infrastructure may change, but there’s one thing it won’t be: on-prem. “I don’t believe in this day and time there’s any reason to have your own data center,” says Price. “People have realized you can’t be the experts in all these things. At ASCP, if it plugs in, it’s an IT problem. We’re responsible for all of it, which is nice, but I don’t have time for my senior engineer to learn everything about VMware. So I have Summit.”

