



CASE STUDY

InterBel Telephone

- 45% cost savings compared to VMware
- Migration from VMware to VergeOS in under two hours

InterBel Telephone, a leading telecom provider in northwest Montana, faced a pivotal challenge in refreshing its aging IT infrastructure. Their existing environment relied on two separate systems: a Dell EMC legacy setup and a Cisco UCS configuration with NetApp storage serving virtual machines via iSCSI. While this infrastructure had served them well, the UCS blades and NetApp storage had reached end-of-life, and the costs associated with maintaining their VMware platform had become untenable. A quote from VMware revealed a jump in costs by 30%, primarily due to increased software licensing fees. This financial pressure and the need for modernization set the stage for a transformative overhaul.

For InterBel, the Broadcom acquisition of VMware was the final straw. The skyrocketing costs were a “punch in the gut,” leading them to consider alternative solutions. They initially explored hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) solutions but encountered steep pricing and resource constraints that forced them to question whether modernization was feasible. As a one-person IT team managing everything from security to Exchange, the IT manager, Tom Rasmussen, needed a simple, flexible solution aligned with their budget.

DISCOVERING VERGEIO

When Tom discovered VergelO, he was almost ready to give up on finding a viable HCI option. However, VergelO caught his attention with its straightforward approach and ability to run on various hardware. After watching VergelO’s videos and learning more about its features, he was intrigued by its potential to simplify operations and lower costs.

The decision to move forward with VergelO was reinforced during a demo conducted by VergelO’s team. Tom described the experience as like “reading an open book.” The demo’s simplicity stood out, especially when compared to the complexity of their existing Cisco UCS environment. VergelO’s platform appeared easy to deploy and manage, which was critical for a one-person IT team. The lab setup proved these claims, taking under two hours to complete, with additional nodes integrated in just fifteen minutes—starkly contrasting the time-consuming configurations required for their old NetApp and UCS systems.

A SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION

The transition to VergelO was remarkably smooth, with most of the work involving migration and IP address adjustments. The new infrastructure was built on Lenovo ThinkSystem SR650 servers, chosen for their cost-effectiveness and long maintenance cycles. The Lenovo nodes were dedicated to production workloads, and each server utilized 48-core Intel processors and all-flash storage. Another node was configured as an ioGuardian server for backup and disaster recovery using hard disk drives.

A key feature of VergeOS that stood out was its ability to mix different types of media seamlessly. In InterBel’s case, production servers used SSD storage with ample expansion room. VergeOS’s ioOptimize functionality enabled Tom to add drives to existing servers without requiring additional nodes. This flexibility meant future expansions could involve “compute-only” servers—essentially bare servers with just a boot SSD—further enhancing cost efficiency and scalability.

RESULTS

The benefits of moving to VergelO were immediate and significant. InterBel received a quote that was nearly 30% above their original budget for the infrastructure refresh. However, by leveraging VergelO, they completed the project for over 28% less than their initial budget—realizing a remarkable savings of more than 45% compared to VMware’s pricing. Tom noted how rare it is for IT projects to come in under budget, but VergelO’s per-node licensing model and hardware flexibility made it achievable. Furthermore, transitioning to Lenovo servers, enabled by VergeOS’ flexible hardware support, significantly reduced long-term maintenance costs, amplifying the overall financial benefits.

The performance improvements were equally impressive. The new all-flash system provided speed and reliability that surpassed their previous setup. The unified management interface simplified daily operations, offering a single pane of glass to oversee everything. This efficiency was a game-changer for a one-person IT team juggling multiple responsibilities.

Disaster recovery also received a significant upgrade. The ioGuardian node added robust DR capabilities, and plans are underway to relocate it to a separate site for increased geographic redundancy. Tom valued the ease of managing VergelO’s disaster recovery features and their ability to integrate seamlessly with existing processes.

LOOKING AHEAD

With its VergelO infrastructure, InterBel is well-positioned for the future. The ability to scale the environment by adding compute nodes as needed ensures that its investment will continue to meet InterBel’s needs for years. Relocating its ioGuardian node to a separate facility will further strengthen the organization’s disaster recovery strategy.

REFLECTIONS

When reflecting on his experience, Tom encouraged other organizations to consider VergelO seriously. He emphasized the importance of simplicity, ease of migration, and compatibility with existing hardware. VergelO, he said, offers quick virtual machine deployment and a one-stop shop for IT infrastructure management. “VergelO is where simplicity and efficiency meet,” he said. “It’s the place to call.”

CONCLUSION

For InterBel Telephone, VergelO was the solution they didn’t know they needed. It provided the cost savings, performance improvement, and simplicity they required to modernize their IT environment without compromise. VergelO transformed what could have been a stressful infrastructure refresh into a smooth, under-budget success story, equipping InterBel with the tools it needs to continue serving its community with reliability and excellence.