

Enabling non-stop availability for a dynamic retail environment.

How **Grupo Ali** used Lenovo ThinkAgile VX solutions virtualized with VMware vSAN™ software to unlock greater resilience for both brick and mortar and online stores, driving a growth in sales.

Lenovo Infrastructure Solutions
for The Data-Centered

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Background

Established in 1977, Grupo Ali is a medium-sized retailer headquartered in Ferrol, Spain. The company has three verticals: Ali Baby, Ali Toys, and Ali Home, offering baby products, toys, and household items respectively. Today, Grupo Ali's retail space encompasses more than 12,000 square meters and the company operates warehouses covering approximately 6,000 square meters.

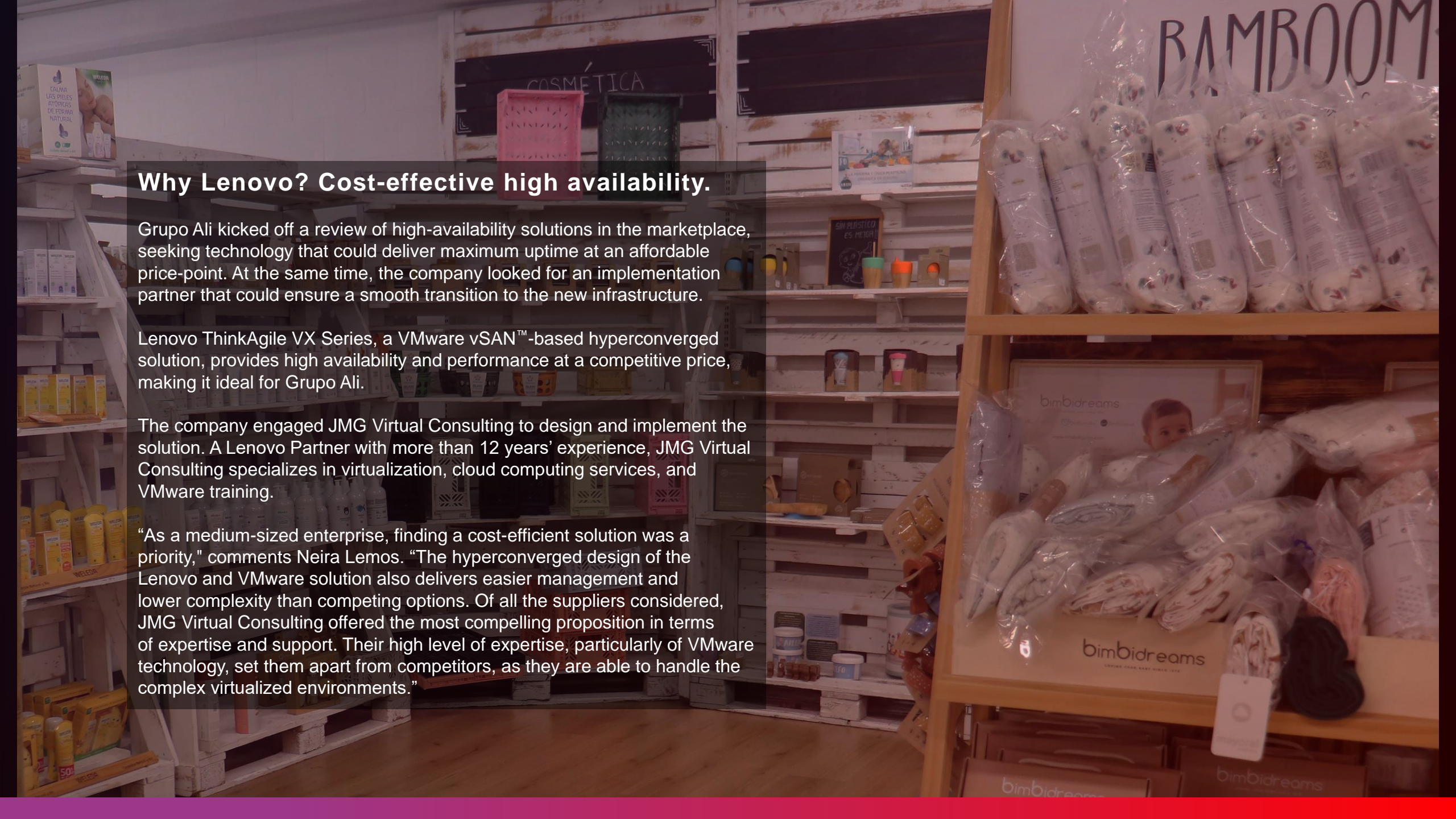
Grupo Ali is now focused on growing from one of the main retailers in Ferrol to capturing sales across Spain through its online stores. When the COVID-19 pandemic limited footfall at the company's stores, Grupo Ali seized the opportunity to invest in its online presence.

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Challenge

To meet its online sales goals, Grupo Ali must provide a consistent and high quality customer experience. The company recognized that a seamless check-out process across all channels and short response times online are both key components to ensure that it can compete in a crowded marketplace. However, Grupo Ali's previous IT infrastructure represented a challenge, failing to provide the availability and scalability that the company needed to take the next step in its development.

"Before, if one of our servers went down—which happened periodically—we were forced to operate as though we were in ancient times," explains Daniel Neira Lemos, IT Manager at Grupo Ali. "Our sales registers would stop working, meaning our staff had to note down order details by hand. This wasn't just time-consuming, but also introduced headaches when it came to accounting. To enhance the customer experience and drive growth, it was time to refresh our infrastructure."



Why Lenovo? Cost-effective high availability.

Grupo Ali kicked off a review of high-availability solutions in the marketplace, seeking technology that could deliver maximum uptime at an affordable price-point. At the same time, the company looked for an implementation partner that could ensure a smooth transition to the new infrastructure.

Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series, a VMware vSAN™-based hyperconverged solution, provides high availability and performance at a competitive price, making it ideal for Grupo Ali.

The company engaged JMG Virtual Consulting to design and implement the solution. A Lenovo Partner with more than 12 years' experience, JMG Virtual Consulting specializes in virtualization, cloud computing services, and VMware training.

“As a medium-sized enterprise, finding a cost-efficient solution was a priority,” comments Neira Lemos. “The hyperconverged design of the Lenovo and VMware solution also delivers easier management and lower complexity than competing options. Of all the suppliers considered, JMG Virtual Consulting offered the most compelling proposition in terms of expertise and support. Their high level of expertise, particularly of VMware technology, set them apart from competitors, as they are able to handle the complex virtualized environments.”

Deploying while selling.

Grupo Ali decided to implement three separate two-node Lenovo ThinkAgile VX clusters, one cluster at each of its three stores in Galicia. The company looked to JMG Virtual Consulting to help achieve a rapid, non-disruptive migration to the new environment.

"JMG helped out with the design and installation of the Lenovo and VMware solution," says Neira Lemos. "We completed the move in just three weeks over the August holiday period, while keeping our stores open, with JMG providing support remotely."

Grupo Ali is already planning to join the three Lenovo ThinkAgile VX clusters into a single stretch cluster for high availability and disaster recovery across all stores. The company will set up a vSAN stretched cluster with two active/active sites with identical VMware ESXi™ hosts distributed evenly between two of its stores, connected via a high-bandwidth, low-latency link. The third store will host a vSAN witness host, connected to both the active/active sites. In the unlikely event of a failure at one site, a full copy of the virtual machines will be available at the other, providing resiliency against hardware failure, enabling rapid data recovery in the event of a disaster and helping to keep operations on track.



"With help from JMG Virtual Consulting, we were able to overcome minor mishaps with our network to deploy everything successfully, while continuing to make sales throughout."

Daniel Neira Lemos
IT Manager, Grupo Ali

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Results

Since deploying the Lenovo and VMware solution, Grupo Ali has enjoyed 100% uptime for its IT infrastructure. The company has gained a highly available platform to deliver consistently excellent experiences to customers both in-store and online.

Grupo Ali has also seen significant improvements to IT performance: backups complete in up to 93% less time and employees can execute sales queries much faster than before. With a more responsive, resilient IT infrastructure in place, the company is ideally positioned to achieve its expansion goals and sharpen its competitive edge.



- ✓ 100% uptime since implementation supports exceptional customer experiences
- ✓ Up to 93% reduction in backup times boosts business resilience
- ✓ Delivers data to employees faster, helping them to provide a responsive service



“Everything runs more quickly, reliably, and simply since we moved to the Lenovo and VMware hyperconverged solution. Interruptions to our sales processes are a thing of the past, so we can focus on growing our online business.”

Daniel Neira Lemos
IT Manager, Grupo Ali

What will you do with Lenovo software-defined infrastructure solutions?

The Data-Centered deliver consistent customer experiences in store and online with Lenovo smarter infrastructure solutions, powered by VMware.

Explore Lenovo Software-Defined
Infrastructure Solutions

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