

ExtraFax Virtualization for Microsoft Exchange Quick Reference Guide

Review this quick reference guide to learn about the benefits of virtual servers and two different ways that ExtraFax can be migrated to a virtual server environment.

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Introduction:

With the ongoing trend in many organizations to consolidate and reduce the number of physical servers in their environment to help save capital and operating costs, many companies continue to virtualize their servers. Running servers in a virtual environment such as VMware or Microsoft Hyper-V has quickly become the new standard in I.T. datacenters.

At Extracomm, many customers have asked us “I want to virtualize my ExtraFax server. How can I do this?” Generally speaking, there has always been one major hurdle to overcome as it relates to being able to virtualize any fax server, including ExtraFax. The main issue relates to the fact that fax boards are not natively compatible when installed directly within virtual server hardware. This dilemma has prevented many organizations from being able to virtualize their ExtraFax server. This document will highlight some of the different methods that organizations can consider which would allow them to virtualize their ExtraFax server implementation.

Before we look at different ExtraFax virtualization scenarios, let’s review the top 5 benefits for adopting server virtualization.

Top 5 Benefits of Server Virtualization

1. Server Consolidation = Cost Savings

By consolidating physical servers into virtual servers, not only does it reduce the number total of physical servers needed for IT operations, it creates an automatic opportunity for cost savings since less server hardware is required. Furthermore, there are also cost savings as it relates to reducing the datacenter rack space, floor space as well as power and cooling requirements. At a datacenter, this will help yield significant overall cost savings.

2. Do more with less

With a struggling economy, IT departments and admins have no choice but to do more with less. Server virtualization makes admins more efficient, which helps to free up their time to work on other projects.

3. Allocate server resource more effectively

Before server virtualization existed, administrators would often over-provision servers to ensure that they would meet user needs and demand. Server virtualization minimizes the need for over-provisioning of server resources since admins are able to size every virtual machine as needed.

4. Moving virtual machines from Host to Host

One of the most powerful features of server virtualization is the ability to move a virtual machine from one host to another with no side effect or downtime to the end user community.

5. Disaster Recovery with ease

Since virtual machines are not tied to specific server hardware, when needed, it is possible to restore image-based backups on any server hardware that is capable of running a virtual server.

ExtraFax Server - Virtualization Scenarios

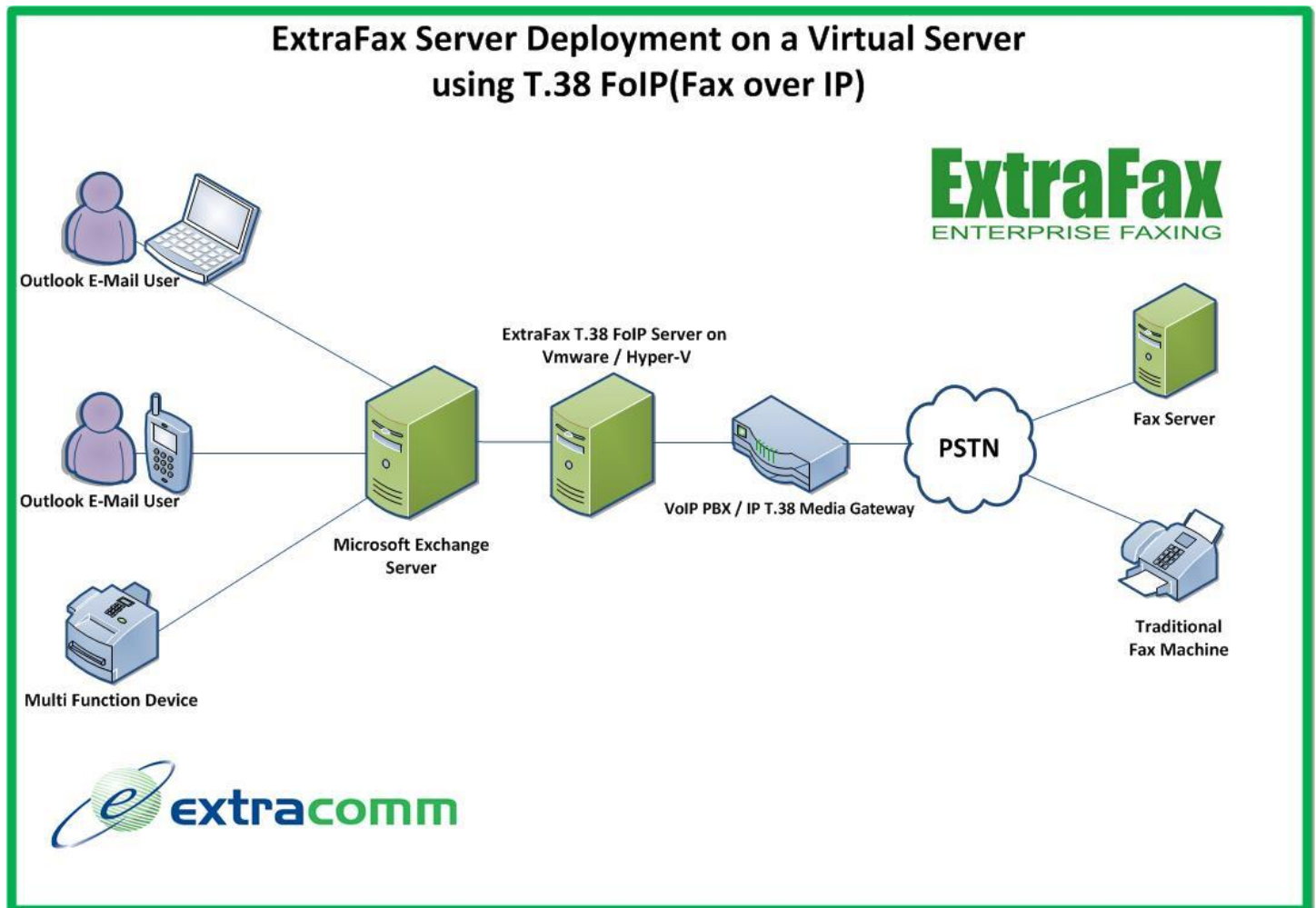
Scenario 1: 100% Virtualization of an ExtraFax server using T.38 FoIP(Fax over IP).

Switching from a ExtraFax implementation that uses a physical fax board(e.g. Dialogic® Brooktrout® TR1034) to an implementation that uses a software based FoIP host module such as the Dialogic® Brooktrout® SR140 is probably the easiest way to achieve 100% virtualization of your ExtraFax server. Since using the Dialogic® Brooktrout® SR140 eliminates the need to use a physical fax board in your server, you can now overcome the one major hurdle that was preventing you from virtualizing your Fax server to begin with.

Using the Dialogic® Brooktrout® SR140 does require the existence of a VoIP(Voice over IP) network or in its absence a IP Media Gateway. By leveraging a company's VoIP network to not only serve voice calls, but fax calls using T.38 protocol, allows companies to save additional costs and better leverage their investment into their VoIP implementation. ExtraFax along with the Dialogic® Brooktrout® SR140 supports a wide range of VoIP infrastructures including the industry leaders such as Cisco, Avaya, Alcatel and Dialogic Gateways. A complete list of supported VoIP implementations can be found at this link:

<http://www.dialogic.com/en/interoperability/fax.aspx>

Figure 1: ExtraFax T.38 FoIP server implementation in a 100% virtual server environment.



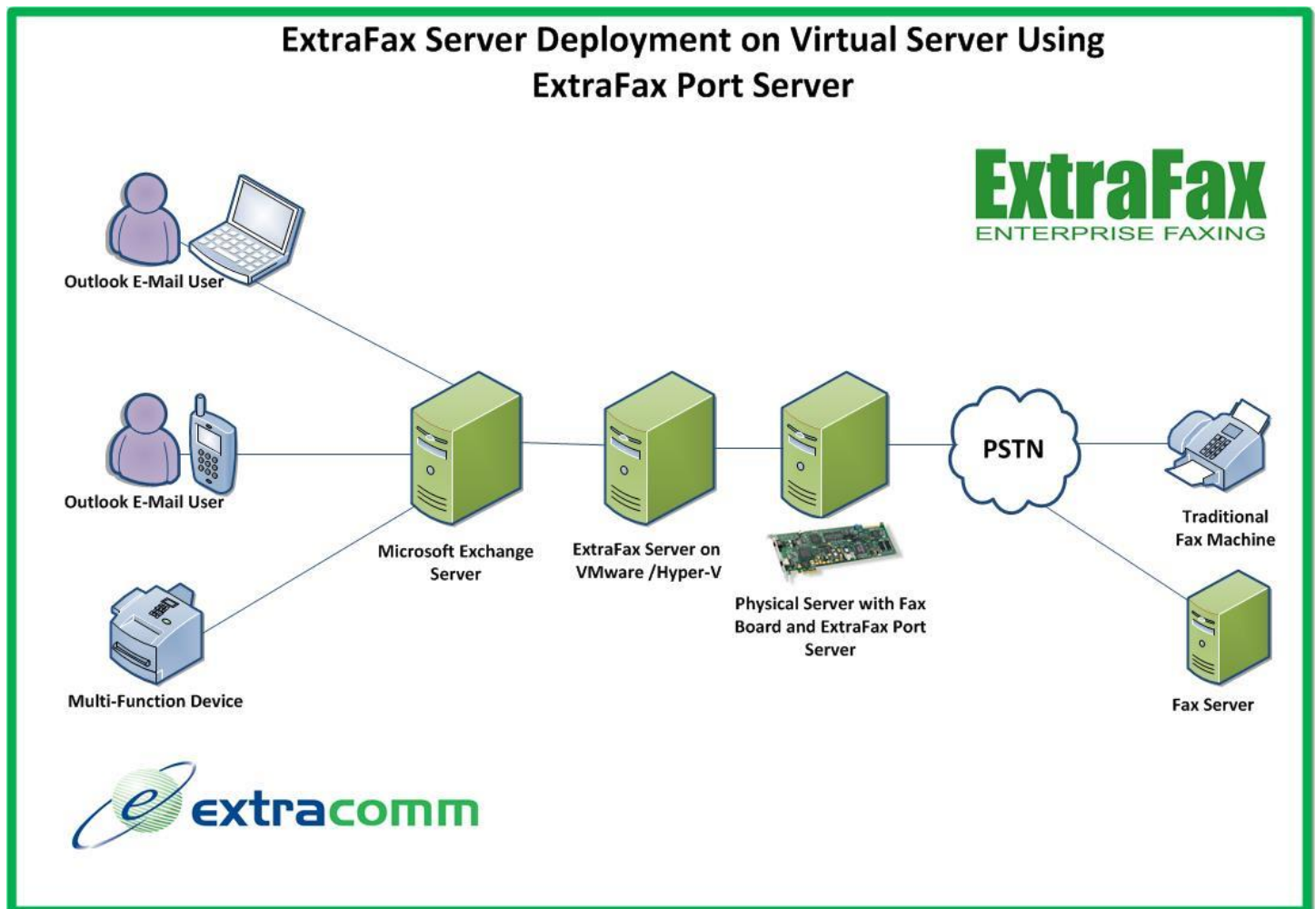
Scenario 2: Virtualization of ExtraFAX using a fax board and ExtraFAX Port Server.

If your organization has previously implemented ExtraFAX using a fax board, it is likely running on a dedicated physical server. Your company has also likely invested thousands of dollars to purchase a fax board. (e.g. Dialogic® Brooktrout® TR1034). In the current economy, simply discarding expensive IT equipment such as a fax board is likely not your company's strategy. The company will likely want to use it as long as possible in order to maximize its ROI.

Though an implementation of ExtraFAX that uses a fax board cannot be 100% virtualized, you can achieve some degree of virtualization of ExtraFAX, while still protecting your investment in the original fax board purchase. Using the ExtraFAX Port Server will help meet this requirement. This virtualization approach of ExtraFAX would involve:

- 1) Migrating the existing ExtraFAX server over to a server running VMware or Microsoft Hyper-V.
- 2) The fax board hardware that was originally installed in the physical server running ExtraFAX would have to remain installed in a physical server. It cannot be installed in the virtual server hardware.
- 3) On the server where the fax board is installed, the ExtraFAX Port Server software component will also need to be installed so that the fax board can communicate using TCPIP with the ExtraFAX Server software on the virtual server.
- 4) ExtraFAX running on the virtual server would then be configured to communicate using TCPIP with the fax board using the ExtraFAX Port Server.

Figure 2: ExtraFAX server implementation in a virtual environment using a fax board and the ExtraFAX Port Server.



Summary:

In this quick reference guide, we reviewed the benefits why many organizations are choosing to virtualize their server environment. We also explored the feasibility of virtualizing an ExtraFax server implementation using FoIP to achieve complete 100% server virtualization. Using the ExtraFax Port Server to achieve virtualization of ExtraFax using a fax board in order to attain maximum ROI for the initial fax board investment was also reviewed.

If you would like more in-depth technical information or wish to learn more about ExtraFax or other Extracomm products, please visit our web site: <http://www.extracomm.com>



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