

[Virtual Design Master Season 4 is Coming!](#) [Call for Sponsors](#)

It's time to begin the planning and coordination of Virtual Design Master Season 4! Yes, it has been a wild ride through seasons 1, 2, and 3, and this one promises to be another adventure for our vDM community, sponsors, and participants.

Virtual Design Master Call for Sponsors

We are seeking sponsors to help build out the Virtual Design Master prize experience for Season 4. Any and all contributions are appreciated, and if it is as simple as a sticker pack, or as big as a Synology or more, we welcome the opportunity to work with you to reward our participants for what is ahead in the competition.

Please use the form below to signal your interest in sponsoring, and we will be in touch with you for the timing and other logistics of the event.

You can view some of the previous content on the Virtual Design Master website which is being prepped for a big rebrand and relaunch very soon!

Thank you, and welcome to Virtual Design Master!

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[Virtual Design Master Live at Interop](#)

As we wind up to the final planning days for Virtual Design Master at Interop, it is getting very exciting to see all of the planning come together. Not only are we going to be running our vDM Live from the Expo Floor in booth 1007 in Las Vegas, but we will be featuring additional community presentations from the venue and streamed live online!

Fun Prizes and a Welcome Back to Chris Wahl

We are especially excited to have Chris Wahl of WahlNetwork.com rejoining the Virtual Design Master team as a panel judge for the vDM Live at Interop. Chris was a part of our premiere vDM event in season 1 and has been a great supporter of our community.



Our first place participant will get a **\$500** prize from Rene Van Den Bedem (aka [VCDX133](#)) and our second place participant will receive a **\$250** prize from the Virtual Design Master team.

Both of our finalists will also receive a networking book of their choice from a great collection including the [Chris Wahl and Steve Pantol book Networking for VMware Administrators](#) care of the

Virtual Design Master Team. This is also just the start. We will be adding some other fun prizes leading up to the launch of the event, so you have to be in it to win it! Register with the nice shiny red button below and select Interop as your event.



3 Awesome Days - 2 Fun Challenges

The format for vDM Live at Interop will be a 2-part challenge. Participants will receive their challenge on Tuesday at 4:00 PM Pacific time. From there, the participants have until 10:00 AM Pacific time to submit their solution. They will defend their design live at 1:00 PM Pacific time and the finalists will be chosen to move on to the final challenge.

The final challenge will be delivered the following day by 10:00 AM Pacific time. Live defense of the final challenge will take place at 1:00 PM Pacific time, where we will select our Virtual Design Master for the first ever networking-oriented vDM event.



The quick challenges will be exciting, and this gives an opportunity for participants to show their networking chops to the Virtual Design Master community.

Networking for All - Everyone is Welcome

The goal of the Virtual Design Master is to offer opportunities for newcomers to a technology to open new doors and push themselves to be able to grow their skills in new areas. If you are just getting started with networking and virtualization, don't be afraid to jump on in. This is a great venue to expand your community, add to your skills, and have a lot of fun at the same time!

Sign ups for the event will be continuing this week and the event page at VirtualDesignMaster.com/Interop2015 will be updated with details and logistics as we lead up to the event.

So what are you waiting for? Sign up and join the fun!

[Virtual Design Master Live! - #vDM at the Toronto VMUG February 26th](#)

It's a proud moment when we get to make announcements, and particularly proud for me as I further expand on something we have been tweeting about. You may have seen the buzz around the upcoming VMUG Super Conference in Toronto on February 26th.



We are building up a lot of plans for the Virtual Design Master, now in its third full season. This is a new year, and an entirely new set of events. We are ramping up to the full season which will take place in summer of 2015 on track with the usual schedule. What is different with this year is that we are also adding some new excitement to it beginning with the Toronto VMUG on February 26th.

2 Whiteboards and Lots of Learning

The focus of the Virtual Design Master Live keynote event happening in Toronto is on the process to think like a Virtual Design Master. One of the reasons that we created vDM to begin with was to highlight the great work being done in the community, and to share the learning with a wide audience to help everyone grow our skills together.

The keynote session will be comprised of [Angelo Luciani](#), [Melissa Palmer](#), and me leading an interactive session to talk about how to get from a blank page to a functional design.



Bringing the best of the audience while helping to guide the process will be very exciting, and we hope to also bring attendees up to help out with the process first hand. The fun of this process is the interaction with everyone at the event!

It's an anything goes build-as-you-go process. That is the beauty of the Virtual Design Master. We give the requirements, and the constraints, that's all.



Well, there will be

Make sure to watch in the coming days as we have even more Virtual Design Master news! Trust me that this is a big announcement and we are only days away from it.

In the mean time, it's also a good time to think about the full season 3 ahead...

Want to be a part of sponsoring Virtual Design Master Season 3?

Since we are talking about Virtual Design Master, it is a great time to begin some planning for you too! If you would like to be a part of the Virtual Design Master Season 3 series as a sponsor supporter, it is as simple as filling out this handy form and we can begin the process to get you involved in vDM Season 3.

For potential sponsors, fill out this simple form and we will respond to you directly via email from the team members and you can be a part of the biggest, most exciting season yet!

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The Making of Virtual Design Master

You can blame Spike TV for this one, because in a strange way that is how Virtual Design Master got started. I've never been much of a regular TV watcher, but for some reason I had been told about a show called Ink Master which was about taking a group of tattoo artists from all over to come together to compete against each other on challenges given by a group of industry experts in tattooing. Having also seen The Apprentice before, I was pretty aware of the reality contest-style show formula, and it hit me that I thought we could do this for technology.

After discussing with [Angelo Luciani](#), he was immediately sold on the idea. We would open the competition to members of the community to be able to perform challenges given around design scenarios in virtualization products. And so began the idea.

From Idea to Action: Season 1

We began working on bringing support on board for prizes. If you've ever gone through the process of organizing an event to give prizes away, you may already know this can be a challenge. Particularly when there is nothing more than a concept to show the sponsors. One thing was different here was that we had the power of community behind us.

Our sponsors came to us with a variety of prize options, ultimately leading to the big grand prize from baremetalcloud.com which was not just a prize, but also a hosting environment for our final challenge scenario.

Another fun part of the event was that we want the design scenarios to be built based on submissions from the community. We put out a blog post asking for design scenarios to see what would come in. This was the beginning of something great about Virtual Design Master, because we received a design proposal from Melissa Palmer with an incredibly detailed storyline built around a zombie apocalypse, a billionaire investor, and a terrifying constraint that all of the hardware was manufactured prior to 2008. We knew this was going to be fun!

The challenge formula was born: **Design, Protect, Orchestrate, Cloud**

We would take the competitors through a full end-to-end test of skills that we knew would put them to tests that could be well beyond their comfort level. This was meant to test the ability to learn and adapt as much as it was to test existing skills.

Next we reached out to the community to find out who would be able to help with the evaluation. Before long we had [Chris Wahl](#) and [Josh Atwell](#) on our judges panel, we knew that this was going to shape up to become something very cool.

Competitors came on board, and we witnessed an incredible set of challenges, with very cool and fun designs. The participants were slowly peeled back at each challenge until we were left with our final two participants, Akmal Waheed and Jonathan Frappier. Armed with their cloud based servers, they launched themselves full force to complete their vCloud deployments. In the end we crowned Akmal Waheed as vDM001, the first ever Virtual Design Master.

That was just the beginning.

And Then There Were Three: Melissa Palmer, Creative Director

As Angelo and I began thinking of what we could do for Season 2, we asked [Melissa Palmer](#) to come on board as our Creative Director. Having been such an integral part of our first season, the design scenario Melissa proposed, and the accompanying story, told us that we needed her to be a part of this in a big way as we launched the next iteration.

We've been very proud to have Melissa be a part of Season 2, and as we found out, her design abilities could test the best of the IT community at every step of the way.

From Competitor to Producer: Jonathan Frappier Joined the Team

Another fun part with Season 2 was that Jonathan Frappier joined in to help with our production this time after having been involved as a competitor in Season 1. Jonathan is a great supporter of the IT community through the work he does inside and outside of the office, so this was very helpful for the team to have someone else on board to make Virtual Design Master into a bigger, better version of itself.

Season 2: Beyond the Clouds

Sponsor hunting after the success of Season 1 was a much quicker experience, and we were well on the way to building a great prize pack for the winner. What had changed this year is that where we had 6 competitors in Season 1, we were suddenly getting a great response and we now had 11 competitors heading into Season 2. It looks like we may have a hit on our hands ☐

Super Sized Competitor Pool, and Super Sized Judging Panel

This time around we also saw a great participation from our judges. We were glad to welcome back Josh Atwell from Season 1, and he was joined by [Josh Odgers](#), [Brian Kirsch](#), [Andrea Mauro](#), and [Maish Saidel-Keesing](#). We also had [Tom Howarth](#) join us for support because he had wanted to compete but was unable to, so he immediately jumped in with an offer to help with organizing and judging.

The story and challenges were ready to go thanks to Melissa, and we were underway. With an already impressive pool of prizes and a powerful group of competitors, we thought we were going to have an incredible season. And then something happened that wowed us in an even bigger way.

VCDX133 and the Big Prize

In a surprise move that we couldn't have anticipated, [Rene Van Den Bedem \(www.vcdx133.com\)](#) reached out to us with an offer of his help to the grand prize. It was more than we could have asked for: a full coverage of the VCDX test fee paired with 40 hours of mentoring towards the test. We were honored and humbled by the offer.

Now we knew that we had something big. This time around we saw our challenges being answered with a variety of technologies and methods. We introduced OpenStack, Docker, and intense requirements for the competitors. They answered with strong designs, and the judging sessions were becoming a fun online community event.

The theme of Virtual Design Master became something that we couldn't have imagined: "How can I help?"

Each competitor who was pulled out at the various challenges immediately replied to us and asked how they could help to support the team with the rest of the competition. Competitors were helping each other in areas where nobody had experience. An online following was keeping a close eye on things and we began seeing something amazing happen. This was becoming a tight-knit group that led to the grand finale where we presented our top 3 finishers with great prize packages, including sending grand prize winner Timothy Patterson to start the journey towards his VCDX.

The team and I couldn't be happier with the response. We put our time into this to do one thing: highlight the power of community and the great people and skills which may not have had a chance to be seen without this kind of an opportunity.

#vDM30in30

The very driver that brought you this and many posts like it was a result of the Virtual Design Master community. We started up the the [#vDM30in30 blog series as I wrote about here](#) that triggered a bunch of great content creators to jump on board.

So, with all that came together up to this point, what's next?

Season 3: Destination VCDX, Coming Soon!

That's right everyone, we couldn't possibly leave this to just two seasons. I remember writing a tweet that "what started out as a competition, suddenly became a community" and this has proven to be one of the most exciting projects that we have worked on. For that reason, we are in the planning phases to re-launch in 2015 with a new website, a new set of challenges, a new pool of participants, and a massive community wrapped around it.

Thank you all for the great support in Season 2, and we will be very excited to open the doors on Season 3 in Q1 of 2015. See you then!