Case Study:
ABB Optical Group Sees IT Future

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Your Smarter Partner™

THE CHALLENGE

- Near-capacity processor loads
- Downtime and low response times
- Limited storage
- Doubled demands on current system
- Replace entire infrastructure in 90 days
- Consolidate systems from two companies
- Accommodate anticipated growth

THE SOLUTION

- IBM Power7 System with AIX7
- IBM Flex System Enterprise Chassis
- IBM Flex System p260
- IBM V7000 SAN with 7 terabytes of storage

THE RESULTS

- Simplified IT environment
- Improved productivity
- High performance and capacity
- Larger memory capacity
- More reliable and secure
- Virus-resistant architecture
- Highly flexible and scalable
- Cloud-enabled scalability

Mission-Critical IBM Solution Delivered in Record Time by Flagship Solutions Group

ABB OPTICAL GROUP

When the merger of ABB Concise Optical Group (COG), of Coral Springs, Florida and Optical Distributor Group (ODG), of Hawthorne, New York was finalized in January 2013, it created a powerful dynamic for growth.

The new company, called the ABB Optical Group, created economies of scale by combining their resources and expertise in distributing optical products, including contact lenses, ophthalmic lenses, frames, sunglasses, accessories and contact lens solutions. With a combined estimated $1 billion in sales, ABB Optical Group is now the largest optical lens distributor in the United States.

It is the industry leader in fulfillment and small parcel shipping and optical courier network management. The ABB Optical Group supplies more than 30,000 eye care professionals with optical products, and ships more than 40 percent of all optical orders in the United States from distribution centers in Coral Springs, Florida, Marshfield, Massachusetts, Alameda, California and Hawthorne, New York.

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THE CHALLENGE

Management anticipated that the sales volume would be increased by 100 percent and the staff would be doubled. Ross Hunton, IT Director of ABB Optical Group at the Coral Springs, Florida headquarters, was responsible for combining the IT infrastructure of the two companies and integrating the legacy systems. He took stock of the existing systems and put together a list of things that needed to be done. "The current IBM p5 servers and systems were already near capacity processor loads and we would not have enough available disk space required for the merged company," Hunton recounted. "And we wanted to not only double, but quadruple capacity. With only 90 days to get it done," he said, "I knew I was facing a situation not unlike driving down the road at 100 miles per hour and changing the tires without stopping."

Hunton turned to Flagship Solutions Group (FSG), an IBM Premier Business Partner, to do a system evaluation and provide a proposal. "Flagship had previously performed the upgrades on the IBM p5 series and distinguished themselves with their responsiveness and professionalism," Hunton said.

The FSG Account Executive quickly put together a team of experts to evaluate the current performance parameters, compare them with the new business requirements, and propose the best solution. "Even before the contract was signed, Flagship was able to get the identified equipment pre-allocated and ready to ship when the go-ahead was received," Hunton added.

THE SOLUTION

The solution included creating a new architecture and configuring an infrastructure to consolidate workloads, increase capacity and speed, handle rapid growth, create efficiencies, and enhance security.

IBM Power 7 System with AIX 7
The IBM p7 AIX is designed for virtualized consolidation of business-critical workloads. It provides an infrastructure that can handle rapid growth and manage business risk while meeting higher required service levels. It is cloud-enabled for fast implementation of new workloads, provides secure, application availability, has a modular, economically efficient design, and is virtualized from within for better integration.

The AIX 7 operating system, designed with Power Architecture technology, was selected for its proven scalability, advanced virtualization, security, manageability and reliability features. AIX 7 is IBM's market-leading UNIX operating system.

IBM Flex System Enterprise Chassis
The IBM Flex System Enterprise provides a high-performance, integrated infrastructure platform that unifies the management of compute, storage, networking and virtualization resources that use built-in Patterns of Expertise. The Flex System enables faster time-to-value and reduced operational expense.

IBM Flex System p260
The IBM Flex System p260 compute node offers large memory capacity, outstanding performance of the POWER7+ processor, industrial- strength virtualization and workload-optimizing capabilities for small- to-midsize database servers and consolidation of virtualized application servers.

IBM V7000 SAN with 7 terabytes of storage
The IBM Flex System portfolio offers both 8 Gb and 16 Gb SAN-connectivity Fibre Channel offerings for easy integration with any SAN environment. High- performance, scalable offerings are designed for simple and cost-effective scalability.

IBM Power 740 Express with V3700 Storage Array
The IBM Power 740 Express is designed with large memory and I/O capacity for the most demanding processing environments. It is deployed as a back-up server in Alameda.

THE RESULTS

"The performance of the system has exceeded our expectations, making us proud of what was accomplished in the 90-day time frame," Hunton said. "FSG hit the project deliverable dates, and helped us change our architecture and performance dramatically."

"This was a mission critical project," stated Hunton. "Eighty percent of our order volume, which comes through e-commerce on the website, was at stake. With our systems crashing, it became a matter of being in business or not. Flagship understands our business, has great technical resources within their company and among their partners, and they make themselves available 24/7," he continued. "Contracting FSG to help was our only prayer of changing our entire system in the allotted time frame."