Vast-Auto Distribution Switches to Nutanix

CHALLENGE

Vast-Auto Distribution provides hosted IT services for over 50 parts stores and 80 garages. Although the company's centralized IT team was performing most of the processing jobs during off hours, data backup and end-of-day sales reports were starting to creep into the work day for many of its clients. The reliance on outdated systems was also creating a huge administrative burden for the IT team and impacting their ability to launch new services. Due to the escalating performance and management issues, Vast-Auto's IT team made the decision to refresh the five-year-old legacy infrastructure, including three LeftHand (HPE StorVirtual) SANs.

Mario Campbell is the IT Director for Vast-Auto Distribution. He manages all of the infrastructure at the company's seven parts warehouses, and supports hosting services for thousands of customers at hundreds of retail locations. "Our IT team had been struggling with performance issues on the aging SAN for quite a while," Campbell admitted. "We had to manually spread and monitor each of our customers' day-end processes from nine at night until five in the morning. We couldn't run multiple jobs at the same time, because too many transactions were hitting our SAN, and it was dying. As a result, reports didn't always finish on time and our customers were starting to experience system delays during business hours. We knew it was time to switch to a better storage and server solution."

SOLUTION

Vast-Auto Distribution evaluated a variety of infrastructure options from HP and several other SAN and storage vendors. After talking to representatives from Dell and Nutanix and hearing about the combined hyperconverged solution, Vast-Auto made the decision to purchase four Dell EMC XC630 appliances. Dell's proven x86 server platform integrates with Nutanix's web-scale software to provide an enterprise-class, hyperconverged appliance for Vast-Auto's virtualized environment.

"Before we moved to Nutanix, all of our stores and garages were relying on physical servers," explained Adrian Popa, systems administrator for Vast-Auto Distribution. "Whenever their local servers would go down, they'd frantically call us for help. Fortunately, we convinced them to go with our hosted solution. We told them we could house their entire infrastructure at our main datacenter, we'd manage everything for them, and run their backups every night. And if they ever had an issue, we could get them back on their feet right away with our fully redundant systems."

> **"Ever since we implemented the Nutanix and Dell XC hyperconverged solution, the sky is blue and life is beautiful again. Everything is working extremely well."**
>
> – Mario Campbell, Director of IT, Vast-Auto Distribution

RESULTS

An Easy Installation and Fast Migration

"The installation went very quickly," Popa reported. "Once the Dell appliance was up and running, we started migrating our VM environment over to Nutanix. It was extremely easy and the process was seamless." Vast-Auto Distribution now has 50 virtual environments running on the Nutanix and the Dell EMC platform, including the company's mission-critical Eagle (Epicor) point-of-sale (POS) system.

Performance and Manageability Advantages

"All of our applications are running much faster on Dell and Nutanix," Campbell noted. "We haven't had a single complaint from any of our customers since we went live. End-of-day processing jobs now complete on time, without any issues or impacts on system performance. Backups are much faster too. Jobs that used to take multiple hours on our legacy systems finish in less than 20 minutes on Dell and Nutanix."

CapEx and OpEx Reductions

The Nutanix and Dell EMC solution has reduced both CapEx and OpEx for Vast-Auto Distribution. "We have been able to reduce IT management time and administrative costs by automating our day-end processes," Campbell said. "We also obtained a huge reduction in CapEx. Our three LeftHand storage systems were very expensive to purchase and maintain. By going with the hyperconverged Dell XC and Nutanix solution, we now have just one box that contains everything we need. Not only is the environment easier to manage, it eliminates the requirement to work with a bunch of different infrastructure vendors for purchasing and technical support."

NEXT STEPS

Launching a New BI Service on Nutanix

The combined solution is enabling Vast-Auto Distribution to launch a variety of new services for its customers. "There is an optional business intelligence tool with our Epicor Eagle POS system called Compass," Campbell explained. "With the high performance of the Dell and Nutanix solution, we can now offer the BI tool to all of our customers. All of our corporate stores have already deployed Compass and are very impressed with the purchasing insights they are able to obtain with the new solution."

Moving Additional Workloads to Nutanix

"We bought a very large Dell server with 12 SSD modules for our Great Plains ERP system two years ago," noted Campbell. "This huge system does provide the high IOPS needed for that application, but we spent a lot of money on that box. We'd like to move our ERP system over to the Dell XC and Nutanix infrastructure when that server reaches end-of-life in order to take advantage of the cost-effective performance we are getting with the hyperconverged XC appliance."

Vast-Auto Distribution is also running Epicor Vision, an integrated software for the Automotive Aftermarket industry. "We are managing all our operations in all our warehouses across Eastern Canada with the Vision application," Popa said. "This is another application that we'd like to move over from the large Dell server to the Nutanix and Dell EMC XC system as soon as possible."

"Ever since we implemented the Nutanix and Dell hyperconverged solution, the sky is blue and life is beautiful again. Everything is working extremely well," concluded Campbell.

Company

Vast-Auto Distribution is a leading provider of automotive parts in Eastern Canada. Operating the Auto Value, Mister Muffler, Auto Mecano, and OCTO Auto Service Plus banners, Vast-Auto offers its customers a wide range of quality parts, innovative marketing programs, training, and business management systems. Vast-Auto's seven distribution centers cover nearly 400,000 square feet and the company employs over 350 automotive professionals.

Industry

Automotive

Business Need

Vast-Auto Distribution was relying on an aging SAN and server solution that could not provide enough performance for its clients' business-critical applications.

Solution

› Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform

› Dell EMC XC630 web-scale hyperconverged appliances

Benefits

› Improved end-of-day processing for all retail outlets and garage sites

› Cut backup times from several hours to 20 minutes

› Reduced both CapEx and OpEx

› Obtained the ability to launch new business intelligence offerings

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