Auto Parts Manufacturing

About the Customer

Our customer is an independent designer and manufacturer of highly engineered electrical and electronic components, modules and systems principally for the automotive, medium- and heavy-duty truck, agricultural and off-highway vehicle markets. Their products help their customers produce better quality vehicles, featuring more reliable and sophisticated electrical and electronic systems. Based in Ohio, their global reach consists of almost 6000 employees in 20 manufacturing and design centers at various locations around the world.

Our customer has two reportable segments:
Electronics and Control Devices.
The Electronics reportable segment offers solutions that include, electronic instrument clusters, electronic control units, driver information systems and electrical distribution systems, which are sold primarily to the medium- and heavy-duty truck, agricultural and off-highway vehicle markets.

The Control Devices reportable segment focuses on products that monitor, measure or activate a specific function within the vehicle and are sold primarily to the automotive market.

The Environment

They have a very talented and knowledgeable IT department. Not content to be 'sold' technology, they probe, research and thoroughly investigate so that they can make informed decisions. Like all companies with datacenters, they were experiencing growth at a rate that was unexpected and threatening to become unmanageable. Consequently, they needed a plan to move forward, that would both address the immediate acute growth challenge, and allow for a manageable growth path. The growth was not only related to their data. The management of their information also necessitated the growth of their hardware infrastructure over the years, with 7 racks housing 70 servers in their main datacenter. It was soon evident that there was no room for additional growth in the datacenter, and that power and cooling were becoming an issue as well.

The Requirement

Their initial requirement was to cure their backup pain. Their backups were consistently failing, which put their compliancy at risk, not to mention the exposure of not having a contingency for disaster recovery. Their initial response was to replace their backup software, although they had only recently purchased it from another reseller. They called Open Storage Solutions for advice. We immediately did a backup assessment and determined that their recently purchased CommVault backup software was indeed adequate for their needs, but had been configured incorrectly by the reseller who had sold it to them. They had made the right decision on the purchase of the CommVault software, they only needed to have it set up properly and be trained on it.

We get IT.™

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The Solution

The Open Storage Solutions Professional Services team reconfigured the CommVault software and trained their IT staff on the CommVault package. The backups now worked as they should and the folks at the datacenter were so happy with CommVault, that they chose to deploy it to all 14 locations, worldwide. The remote locations were all running different backup software at the time, but the training they took, enabled them to install the CommVault backup agents themselves, while Open Storage Solutions was on hand to help with the heavy lifting, such as configuring and upgrading them from a 32 bit to a 64 bit environment. For their remote locations, they used Overland Storage NEO 2000 tape libraries, while in their main datacenter, they used 2 Nexsan SATAbeasts for their Disk-to-Disk backup, and an Overland NEO 4000, with 4 LTO4 drives for their tape archive.

This standardization of their backup environment has allowed the customer to plan for a consolidated backup architecture, share knowledge amongst their remote locations, and engage in peer support across the organization, saving them time and money.

After a subsequent data assessment, Open Storage Solutions Professional Services team had a few recommendations. The first was to consolidate their current direct attached storage onto a centralized high performance EqualLogic array.

"We knew that we wanted a SAN," said their Director of IT. "Because we have a worldwide footprint and various skillsets throughout the world, we needed something that people already understood, as well as easy to deploy. We chose the Dell EqualLogic solution."

The EqualLogic array gave them the ability to pool their storage on a SAN, and to dynamically allocate the correct amount of storage needed by the servers, without having to grossly over-provision to account for growth.

"It was very easy to set up," continued the Director of IT. "I had no manual, I had the device, I had an IP address, and I had it working on my notebook in fifteen minutes."

The Auto Load Balancing feature, that comes standard on the EqualLogic array, also gave them the ability to dynamically add capacity and performance whenever they need it in the future. In addition to the Auto Load Balancing, the EqualLogic came complete with replication and snapshots to further protect their critical data, and the 3 Gigabit Ethernet ports on the array gave them all the high performance they needed, without the cost and complexity of Fibre-Channel.

The second recommendation was a server consolidation using VMware. This consolidation allowed the customer to reduce the number of physical servers to 10% of what they had before, just 7 physical servers fitting into 2 racks. This let them shave the cost of their power consumption on the servers, as well as gave them the opportunity to shut down one of their air conditioners, giving even more power saving. The server consolidation also opened up some rack space for future growth, without the need to build an additional datacenter or the need to relocate the current datacenter.

Customer Profile
Listed on the NYSE
Corporate Headquarters
Ohio, United States
Worldwide Employees
Approximately 5,600
Locations
20 manufacturing and design centers and 18 sales and engineering support offices around the world, including: Brazil, China, Estonia, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States.
2007 Sales
$727.1 million

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