

TOP TO BOTTOM

we know

they know

END TO END

Murray Goulburn solves growth and flexibility challenges with IBM

Overview

■ The Challenge

Farmers' co-operative Murray Goulburn wanted to introduce faster and more reliable business reporting across its nine manufacturing sites in Australia. Existing servers had reached their processing performance limits and data storage devices had reached capacity. These twin technical issues prevented Murray Goulburn from introducing new applications or from adding users, which constrained business operations.

■ The Solution

Murray Goulburn migrated from seven Sun servers to a single IBM Power Systems server, taking advantage of virtualization capabilities to introduce a high-performance, flexible landscape that solved the processing performance issues. To meet the storage challenge, the company introduced IBM SAN Volume Controller, consolidating and virtualizing storage devices.

■ The Benefits

With the IBM Power Systems server, Murray Goulburn is able to run each application environment with exactly the compute capacity required, meeting its business requirements. With the addition of IBM Capacity on Demand, further processors may be enabled at times of peak workload to ensure service levels are always met. IBM SAN Volume Controller allows new storage volumes to be added without business interruption, providing a scalable and low-cost solution to the company's storage challenge.

■ Key Solution Components

Industry: Wholesale Distribution
Applications: SAP® ERP with financial accounting and sales and distribution functionalities, SAP NetWeaver® Business Intelligence
Hardware: IBM® Power Systems™ server
Software: IBM AIX®, IBM SAN Volume Controller, Oracle® database
Services: IBM Global Business Services

Murray Goulburn Co-Operative Company Limited of Melbourne, Australia, is best known for its flagship Devondale brand of dairy products. Established in 1950, the company has around 2,900 supplier-shareholders and is Australia's largest manufacturer of dairy products. For example, its annual milk intake is some 3.3 billion liters, or 35 per cent of Australian milk production. The company generates more than AS\$2.17 billion, with exports to over 100 countries accounting for approximately 9 per cent of world dairy trade.

The nine Murray Goulburn manufacturing sites located throughout the Australian states of Victoria and Tasmania employ 2,300 employees. Keeping track of production, people and finances across the whole organization is a complex operation.

To manage the business, Murray Goulburn was using SAP applications deployed on Sun servers – three for production, three for development, and one to run the databases. The company was also using a SAN based

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on Sun storage systems. With 600 users to support, and ever-increasing data volumes to manage, the infrastructure was at the outer edges of its capabilities.

Paul Stancill, IT Manager responsible for IT systems and equipment at Murray Goulburn, comments, “Storage capacity had reached its limit, the client refresh and backup processes were taking a very long time, and the Sun equipment we had could not be expanded any further. We were looking for a flexible and scalable platform that would enable us to get our response times back to good levels and would also allow us to cater for further expansion in the future.”

Choosing an IBM solution

Murray Goulburn turned to IBM to solve the challenge of limited processor growth by deploying an IBM Power Systems server, replacing all seven Sun servers. “Consolidating to a single server was clearly a good option from the point of view of maintenance

and support costs and energy efficiency,” says Paul Stancill. “We wanted a flexible, scalable UNIX platform that could offer high-end performance, and IBM quickly demonstrated that Power Systems with AIX would offer the best value while meeting the demands of future expansion.”

The single IBM Power Systems server running the IBM AIX operating system is divided into virtual servers, providing self-contained environments for both the original SAP applications and for the introduction of the SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence component.

With IBM Power Systems, processor capacity can be assigned to each virtual server exactly as the workload requires. Within the physical server, additional processors may be added or subtracted to the available pool using IBM Capacity on Demand, allowing the company to match its server infrastructure with the business needs.

Paul Stancill comments that IBM Power Systems servers offer “scalability, expandability and the potential to vary our costs to some extent in peak times, with the ability to call processors on or take them off.”

To answer the growing storage needs, Murray Goulburn implemented IBM SAN Volume Controller (SVC), which virtualizes available storage volumes on existing storage devices and pools



them into a single resource, independent of the underlying storage devices. Smaller fractions of space on several different storage systems, including direct attached storage, can be collected and re-presented for use by applications and data; and storage devices can be added, changed and removed without disruption.

The SVC technology has transformed the storage landscape at Murray Goulburn, says Paul Stancill: "We did have some experience of SAN through the Sun A1000 series, but what we found was that it had a degree of inflexibility that was overcome through SAN Volume Controller."

Moving from Sun to IBM

The migration from the former Sun machines to IBM Power Systems servers was handled by IBM Global Business Services, as David O'Gara, Senior Basis Administrator, reports: "We completed the whole migration within three months; it went very smoothly. The actual migration of our production system happened over the weekend, and on the Monday it was virtually a seamless change as far as the users were concerned. The only difference they found was the improvement in response times.

"We found moving from Solaris to AIX very simple, very easy. A one-day delta course was all that was needed."

IBM Global Business Services assisted with system sizing, database migration and solution implementation.

Power Systems – the advantage

The reduction in physical servers has cut the number of CPUs from 26 to just four, with a decline in per-processor software license fees. Lower footprint and power requirements contribute towards a positive environmental impact, as well as cutting real estate costs and energy bills.

The new Power Systems servers also offer considerably greater performance, as David O'Gara remarks: "Batch jobs that were taking two hours are now taking two minutes; I even have one housekeeping job that used to take 24 hours that has now been cut down to two hours."

Looking to the future

With the IBM Power Systems server and SVC in place, Murray Goulburn is now ideally positioned to take advantage of the latest SAP applications.

Paul Stancill concludes, "We are exploring the technology initially by upgrading to SAP ERP 6.0, so that will be our first step.

"At the same time we will get on to the very latest version of Oracle, and that then will enable us to start looking at other SAP components like SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence and the like, in the knowledge and with the comfort that we have a flexible and scalable platform underneath it that we can expand without any disruption to the business."

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Senior Basis Administrator
Murray Goulburn Co-Operative
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