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BCG Systems Provides Streamlined Network Infrastructure Upgrade for Cornwell Quality Tools

Ohio headquartered company, Cornwell Quality Tools – an employee owned manufacturer and distributor of hand tools, power tools, tool storage products, specialty tools, automotive diagnostics, and shop equipment – was looking to implement a robust, highly available, and scalable server virtualization solution to host their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software and distribution applications.

CHALLENGE

To implement a robust, highly available, and scalable server virtualization solution to host Cornwell Quality Tools' Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software and distribution applications.

SOLUTION

HP C7000 Blade Server System, 4 HP Proliant Blades, an EMC SAN Array, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtualization management software.

RESULTS

Cornwell Quality Tools are projected to consolidate their standalone server architecture by over 70%. The Recovery Time Objective (RTO) that was a concern at the outset of the project has been cut from four hours to a matter of minutes if the system does indeed go down for any amount of time.

"We wanted to improve our SLA (Service Level Agreement)," said Cornwell Quality Tool's Director of Information Technology, Mickey Charlton. "Years ago, when I first started here – I've been here twenty-seven years – computer systems were significant to the business, but not to the extent that they are today. We had always felt that if something went wrong with the computer system, if we could get it back up and running in four hours, that would be adequate. But now, in today's business climate, we just can't afford a four hour downtime. Some of the emphasis behind this project was to try to achieve a near zero downtime."

"Another thing is, we had just purchased Microsoft Dynamics AX (a new ERP solution). We wanted to make sure the network could accommodate that – make sure we had enough beef to run that. And finally, we really wanted to get into the virtualization of the network, making it easier to maintain and manage. Those are the three things we were looking to accomplish with this project."

BCG Systems, Inc. was chosen to provide recommendations and the implementation services needed to achieve Cornwell Quality Tools' goals.

Challenges

There were several challenges Cornwell was facing when seeking out a solution to bolster and consolidate their working network infrastructure. At the outset, they were looking to improve their ability to provide a higher service level for their mission critical applications. Another challenge was to implement a scalable network platform capable of growing with their business. The final piece of the project was to have the all-encompassing ability to consolidate a number of servers the company was operating and have enough bandwidth in the network infrastructure to power their ERP software, which is a complex entity that demands very high performance specifications. The ability to virtualize their environment was of interest due to the improved network management and reduction of overall server maintenance the solution provides.

Cornwell has five hundred and fifty independent franchisees that operate mobile equipment distribution vehicles that transmit data electronically on a daily basis to and from corporate headquarters, allowing them to replenish their stock. The application they run in their mobile work vehicles generates an electronic order that Cornwell's system converts into a sales order. All of the data is stored, and is kept for future research, never to be deleted. This Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) was also a factor in trying to figure out the best way of handling the robustness of the network infrastructure issue.

"We wanted a solid all-around solution," said Charlton. "(We) didn't want to just throw money at the problem."



"It's very easy when you're dealing with BCG Systems because they really pamper you through the project. (They're) always on top of things...; coordination, updates, implementation, and they're very un-intrusive in achieving all of (the aforementioned) items here. It's always a pleasure working with them."

Cornwell Quality Tools
Mickey Charlton

About BCG Systems

BCG Systems is a single-source provider of business management software, hardware, and infrastructure planning. Nationally recognized for providing exceptional information management solutions and service, BCG Systems designs, implements and supports cost effective ERP, CRM, and networking systems — in addition to custom applications and Web development. BCG Systems' certified professionals combine experience, commitment and ingenuity to maximize the return on each client's technology investment.

Implementation/Business Impacts

"We completed a discovery process to understand their business challenges," said BCG Systems' Director of Networking Services, Ken Klika. "We provided them with education of the technologies that are available today to solve some of their problems. Important to this was a selection of technologies and equipment they could use for the long term. We did a significant amount of analysis around that goal. In addition, we provided a technology options grid and a recommendations document."

The whole planning process, from initial discussions to recommendations, to prospective design, took about a month to complete.

For the implementation, BCG Systems outfitted Cornwell with an HP C7000 Blade Server System, 4 HP Proliant Blades, an EMC SAN Array, and Microsoft Hyper V Virtualization Management software.

The HP C7000 Blade Server System provided the company with a platform that modernized their production server infrastructure. The server allows Cornwell to grow their server environment as the business grows, leveraging flexibility, reliability, and performance of that system. Cornwell has a long term partnership with HP products that further provides them with security and peace-of-mind.

Upon completion of the project, the company is projected to consolidate their stand-alone server architecture by over 70%. The Recovery Time Objective (RTO) that was a concern at the outset of the project has been cut from four hours to a matter of minutes if the system does indeed go down for any amount of time. Cornwell receives time sensitive information from five hundred and fifty plus access points. Their ability to meet their RPO has been effortless with the leveraging of the newly implemented blade server architecture and server virtualization.

Outlook

BCG Systems' ability to seamlessly implement a new, robust, and streamlined network infrastructure for Cornwell was a highly effective and successful venture.

"We wanted the project to run smoothly," said Charlton. "It did. The goals and expectation laid out in the beginning were met fully. It's very easy when you're dealing with BCG Systems because they really pamper you through the project. (They're) always on top of things...; coordination, updates, implementation, and they're very un-intrusive in achieving all of (the aforementioned) items here. It's always a pleasure working with them."

"We strive to be a strategic partner," said Klika. "We don't just provide technology. We understand their business and work to provide a competitive advantage. We are assisting them with technology, not just presenting them with technology for technology's sake."

After the implementation of the new network platform, BCG Systems, Inc. brought in qualified professionals on their staff to help train and acclimate Cornwell's staff with their newly acquired technology solution.

"They go above and beyond and try to make things as seamless as possible," said Charlton. "The nice thing about BCG Systems is we've learned from them a lot of things regarding project management best practices. They bring a lot to the table as far as professional management of a project. We've learned to do some things in-house the way they do them with us. It's been a good learning process. They're always there if we have a problem we can't deal with or we need some additional training — we leverage their expertise."

When it comes down to it — the discovery process, products, management, and services BCG Systems was able to provide Cornwell with positions them as a qualified technology vendor that is second-to-none.

"When consultants call, and there's plenty of these companies out there, I always say, 'I'm just not interested'," Charlton said. "The relationship with BCG Systems has just been so good I don't entertain other firms."

