

**INDUSTRY**

- Agriculture

CHALLENGE

- Identify an agile, scalable IT infrastructure to support expanding business operations

SOLUTION

- Vblock® System 300, plus Cisco thin clients for true virtual access

RESULTS

- Mitigated risks, with no unplanned outages since 2012
- Eliminated any significant unexpected capital spending for its physical infrastructure
- Allows an IT team of only four to support a staff of 400
- Lets IT focus on adding business value, rather simply handling routine tasks

BROWNES

Reducing risks, cutting costs, and simplifying operations

COUNTING ON VCE'S CONVERGED INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET CHANGING NEEDS, BUILD BUSINESS VALUE, AND ENSURE CONTINUOUS RELIABILITY

Established in 1886, Brownes is Western Australia's oldest and largest dairy with 146 million litres of milk being collected each year. Brownes is an iconic brand, processing 400,000 litres of milk per day, 365 days a year, to bring its customers the milk, yoghurt, cheese, and cream they love. Generations of Western Australians have grown up with Brownes products and they are incredibly loyal to the brand.

NEW IT INFRASTRUCTURE. YOU'VE GOT SIX MONTHS. GO!

Following a period of foreign ownership, a private equity firm purchased Brownes in 2010. The sudden shift in ownership meant that Brownes not only had to deal with the divestment from its previous owner, they also had to migrate quickly from an IT infrastructure that was being run from New Zealand. Since Brownes was faced with a full migration, they had to completely transform their IT model, and quickly.

As the new ownership had also acquired award-winning West N Fresh Gourmet Yoghurt and Casa Dairy, and was beginning to merge them with Brownes, the company required an agile infrastructure that could be scaled across multiple business units. With IT being a critical part of company operations, it was important that the infrastructure be scaled quickly and seamlessly.

In addition to the IT consolidation, there was also the critical challenge of supporting the end-to-end functions of the business. This included fulfilling and delivering orders, running the factory supervisory control and data automation (SCADA) systems, moving the milk off the tankers, putting it through the factories, and facilitating pasteurisation—as well as packing and automated warehousing.

“The capabilities and reliability of the new system has freed up some of my time, meaning I can focus on the things that really matter, like managing my teams and delivering the best outcome for our internal customers.”

— Brad Flintoff, IT Manager, Brownes

FINDING THE RIGHT PROVIDER

The underlying principle for Brownes' selection of their technology partner and infrastructure was reliability. To ensure the best outcome, Brownes spent quite some time aligning IT goals to what the business wanted to achieve and compared proposed solutions. In the end they chose Vocus Communications because the company could support their entire infrastructure. Vocus' existing relationship with VCE, EMC's Converged Platforms Division, and its use of Vblock® Systems offered the additional support and integration Brownes needed throughout the migration process.

SOLUTIONS THAT DELIVER

Vocus assisted Brownes in delivering a fully virtualised IT infrastructure, supported by VCE converged infrastructure, the first of its kind in Western Australia. The integration of Cisco, EMC, and VMware technologies into an engineered system would allow Brownes to rapidly scale their IT operations to meet changing business needs. Simplicity was the key to the Brownes IT overhaul and the Vblock System 300 ensured that they maintained the highest levels of availability without compromising security, speed, or agility.

The solution supports integrated SCADA, factory automation, ERP, office and production systems as well as end-to-end electronic receivables, scheduling, production, and despatch.

Brownes' entire IT infrastructure is now located at Vocus data centres, with diverse fibre linking back to the Brownes sites for reliability. With the relocation to a Vocus data centre, Brownes replaced their Alcatel on-premises PBX system with a hosted and managed service provided by Vocus, further improving efficiency.

Flexibility of user access is supported with the use of Cisco Thin Clients, which deliver true virtual access and gives the Brownes IT team high degrees of control, and a very low overhead laptop and desktop fleet to service.

For Brad Flintoff, IT Manager, Brownes, the highlight was having the design and implementation done in a very short time frame. Within six months the whole environment was up and running and Brownes was able to implement new business processes. Additionally, one technology partner provides Brownes one point of contact.

RESULTS THAT IMPROVE THE BOTTOM LINE

Since deploying their Vblock System in 2012, Brownes have not had a single unplanned outage, helping the business run smoothly. The acquisitions of Western Fresh and Casa Dairy have been seamless, with the business taking on and integrating different systems and applications quickly.

In addition, there has been a significant reduction in IT operating costs with no significant unplanned capital outlay for physical infrastructure.

Brownes have also increased efficiency by keeping their headcount low. Even though IT is essential for 100 percent of the business, over the last four years they've only required an IT team of four to support a staff of 400.

IT staff can now spend more time adding value to the business, with fewer resources needed to just keeping the lights on.

Flintoff noted that the IT environment has been popular with staff as remote access from anywhere in the world helps improve flexibility and productivity. As a result, there has been a massive uptake of the new systems straight away and no downtime during the migration.

"The capabilities and reliability of the new system has freed up some of my time, meaning I can focus on the things that really matter, like managing my teams and delivering the best outcome for our internal customers," said Flintoff.

For all the work and investment in the environment, Flintoff says he sleeps comfortably at night knowing that he won't receive panicked midnight phone calls saying the servers are down.

Surely, a great result for any IT leader.