

LESAINST LOGISTICS

Supply chain experts streamline logistics management with Unity

ESSENTIALS

Industry

Supply chain logistics

Organization Size

450 employees

Business Challenge

- Data growth overloading legacy storage
- Poor application performance sapping employee productivity

Results

- Improved I/O performance by 1,600 percent
- Reduced heavy-duty reporting from four minutes to 30 seconds
- Simplified LUN reconfiguration from 24 hours to nearly instantaneous
- Shrunk data center footprint from 20 to two rack units

Solutions

- Dell EMC Unity
- VMware vSphere
- Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft Dynamics, Manhattan Associates, TMW Systems

UNITY CONSOLIDATES DIVERSE SUPPLY CHAIN DATA

Suppose a product distributor has an expedited order to meet holiday demand. How does the distributor find space on a truck to deliver the merchandise? Or what if a manufacturer needs to assemble its final product using parts imported from around the world—and then get that product to retail stores? For jobs like these, and a host of other supply chain and logistics solutions, companies turn to LeSaint Logistics.

LeSaint develops customized, integrated supply chain solutions that help customers reduce logistics costs, free up working capital, and improve customer service. To do that, LeSaint relies on vast amounts of data and sophisticated logistics management systems. But following years of data growth, LeSaint's legacy HP storage became overloaded and had performance problems. Critical shipment, performance, and other reports took so long that users left their desks while waiting, sapping productivity. And HP storage lacked flexibility to expand as data stores continued to grow.

After evaluating offerings from Dell EMC®, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, NetApp, Pure Storage, and Nimble Storage, LeSaint chose Dell EMC Unity™ storage. Unity brought a much-needed performance boost in a more flexible, space-efficient solution that enables the company to grow and improve productivity.

John Zei, LeSaint's senior director of IT services, comments, "One reason we were attracted to Unity was the reputation of Dell EMC for advanced IT solutions and exceptional customer support. Plus, the Unity storage came in at a lower cost compared to the other competitors and cost less to manage and operate year over year."

ENVIRONMENT

LeSaint replaced its legacy HP storage with Dell EMC Unity 300F all-flash storage to support its entire production environment. This includes Microsoft SQL Server databases, Microsoft Dynamics financial software, Manhattan Associates warehouse management system (WMS), and TMW Systems transportation management system (TMS). The environment is 99 percent virtualized with VMware vSphere.

For disaster recovery, LeSaint deployed Dell EMC Unity 300 hybrid flash storage in a remote site about 300 miles from its production data center. The company uses native Unity replication between the two sites.

LeSaint also uses Dell laptops and desktop PCs, and is adding Dell servers with plans to standardize on Dell and Dell EMC across its enterprise IT infrastructure.

BIG PERFORMANCE BIG BOOST

Since moving to Unity all-flash storage, LeSaint has realized an enormous performance improvement. For I/O per second (IOPS), the company estimates a 1,600 percent improvement, from 3,500 IOPS on HP to 59,500 IOPS on Unity. This affects everything from database queries to reporting.

On average, LeSaint reduced the time to generate point-in-time reports and track an item from being received on the dock to stocking in the warehouse from two minutes to two seconds. Processing of heavier-duty reports, including item velocity, shipment history, productivity and KPI Scorecards, have dropped from four minutes to just 30 seconds.

"Whether it's an analyst or staff on the floor, people notice how much faster everything is now," says Zei. "Response time interacting with an application like warehouse management system is practically instantaneous. People don't need to sit around waiting for reports anymore. Everyone is more productive."

Since customers also run reports directly from LeSaint's WMS and SQL Server environment through its web portal, higher system performance also means a better customer experience.

"Dell server technology integrated with VMware and Unity will shrink our infrastructure down to a point I couldn't have imagined 10 years ago."

John Zei, Senior Director of IT Services, LeSaint Logistics

STORAGE EXPANSION WITHOUT DOWNTIME

Unity also provides LeSaint with more flexibility for everything from configuration and provisioning to managing the day-to-day operational data. This saves a substantial amount of time for the company's IT engineers.

For example, reconfiguring LUNs on HP storage took three solid days—about 24 hours total. With Unity, this same task is nearly instantaneous.

"Unity's flexibility to expand and manipulate storage as our needs change brings significant value to our organization," Zei remarks. "We don't risk disrupting the business by bringing down systems to move data. And Unity has freed up time for our team to focus on activities that directly impact the business in a positive way."

MORE CAPACITY IN LESS SPACE

LeSaint improved data center efficiency significantly with Unity. In just raw storage, Unity nearly doubled capacity over the legacy HP system. When compression and deduplication are fully enabled, the company expects to at least triple storage space. Yet, Unity consumes only two rack units compared to 20 rack units with HP.

"We reduced our data center footprint by a full rack with Unity," notes Zei. "That translates to substantial power savings and more room in the data center to grow."

STRATEGIC MOVE TO STANDARDIZE ON DELL EMC

Zei reflects that LeSaint's positive experience with Unity has now led to the company purchasing Dell servers, further improving data center efficiency.

"Dell server technology integrated with VMware and Unity will shrink our infrastructure down to a point I couldn't have imagined 10 years ago," explains Zei. "We're looking at a full shift to Dell EMC. It started with the Dell desktops and laptops we've been using, then adopting Unity, and now replacing our servers until we're 100% Dell."

Company Overview

LeSaint Logistics develops customized, knowledge-based, integrated supply chain solutions within the specialty chemical, retail and consumer industries. With more than 14 facilities across the United States, LeSaint offers comprehensive supply chain solutions, from warehousing, transportation and fulfillment to inventory management, brokerage services, hazardous materials management, and value-added services. LeSaint clients are supported by the company's TechKnow™ suite of real-time reporting and management tools to provide complete accountability and visibility of logistics processes.

CONTACT US

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