

Devon Health remedies the power problem with IBM BladeCenter



Overview

■ Challenge

To address power and other infrastructure concerns while expanding the capacity to meet the company's growing IT needs

■ Solution

Consolidating 28 servers onto IBM BladeCenter®, including hosting the company's core enterprise application

■ Key Benefits

Dramatic power and space savings, easier systems management and improved reliability

For 15 years, Devon Health Services, Inc. has provided innovative healthcare products and services that combat rising industry costs. Based just outside of Philadelphia, the company's most familiar product is the Devon Health national Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). But as a national healthcare cost-management company, Devon Health's core business is the processing of healthcare claims.

Claims processing poses unique IT challenges, explains Justin Hawley, director of IT at Devon Health. "We work with a lot of different partners," Hawley says. "Every day we deal with file exchanges in various formats, job scheduling, timelines and task automation. System reliability is key, especially during core business hours."

Power issues

Devon Health had been adding servers to keep up with the company's IT demands over the years, creating a mixed-vendor environment that included Dell and HP. "We got in that rhythm where we were buying a new server with every new application," Hawley explains. He and his team were poised to add two new servers to the mix as part of a project to upgrade the infrastructure for the company's mission-critical application—a repricing software product that handles 80 percent of the company's workflow. That's when they made an alarming discovery.

"We had literally run out of power," Hawley says. "Our electrician informed us that we were actually drawing more power than the circuit breaker was rated for. Luckily it had never gone down, but it could have popped at any time. Rather than spending money on a larger backup generator or finding ways to bring in more power from the street, we started looking at other alternatives. That's what brought us to the IBM BladeCenter."

Devon Health chose the BladeCenter HS20 and an IBM System Storage™ DS400 storage area network. They immediately migrated the core enterprise application from two HP servers to the BladeCenter, which also hosts the company's file server, Web server, print server, database server, CRM application and backup domain controllers.

"We've already retired enough physical servers that power is no longer an issue," Hawley reports. The company has targeted 28 servers for consolidation, and they anticipate reducing the number of racks and consoles from seven to two, as well as reducing the number of network connections.

In addition, the BladeCenter is hosting a virtual hosted client solution, reducing many of the costs and challenges related to traditional desktop environments. Benefits include reduced susceptibility to theft and viruses, increased standardization and easier deployment of new users.

Accelerating business value

Hawley says the blades have allowed the company to upgrade operating systems, which has enabled them to take advantage of new solutions. Centralized management, along with higher reliability, has also freed up IT resources.

"The IBM solution has really accelerated our value to the business."

— Justin Hawley, director of IT,
Devon Health Services, Inc.

"We're now able to pursue projects that actually generate revenue for the business—and we're handling them more efficiently," Hawley says. "The IBM solution has really accelerated our value to the business."

"IBM BladeCenter is the centerpiece of our data center," he continues. "It's bringing us up to today's standards and setting us up for the next five to 10 years."

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For more information

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ibm.com/systems/bladecenter

For more information about Devon Health Services, Inc. visit:
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