

Lion Nathan brews a new, cost-effective messaging environment with help from HP and Microsoft



LION NATHAN

“We’ve worked with HP Services for many years to help us gain the greatest value and service levels from our IT resources. It was only natural that we call on them to help us with the pilot of Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 on an HP ProLiant platform.”

– Jane Howard, IT Systems & Applications Manager, Lion Nathan Ltd.

HP customer case study: Upgrade to Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 on a 64-bit AMD Opteron-based HP ProLiant servers

Industry: Premium beverages

Objective:

Build organizational agility and reduce costs by improving reliability and capabilities of critical messaging infrastructure and business processes.

Approach:

Use powerful new functionality in Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 and HP ProLiant 64-bit AMD Opteron™-based servers to extend and secure communications, while consolidating IT infrastructure.

IT improvements:

- Improved messaging-platform management
- Enable consolidation of 10 e-mail servers to three in near future
- Instituted faster, low-impact backups
- Deployed a low-cost, disaster-recovery solution
- Enhanced e-mail access for users
- Advanced to a flexible, scalable infrastructure
- Increased reliability and data security
- Boosted support for mobile and remote users



Business benefits:

- Reduced costs through server consolidation
- Accelerated collaboration and workflow processes
- Enhanced security and reliability of mission-critical e-mail
- Enable access to corporate data from anywhere by any device
- Increased staff productivity
- Boosted security for mobile devices

Lion Nathan tastes early success

Lion Nathan is a leading Australasian producer of beer, fine wine, ready-to-drink (RTD) spirit-based products, and spirit brands. The company employs around 3,000 people and has breweries, wineries, and other interests across Australia and New Zealand. A reliable, flexible communications infrastructure is critical to Lion Nathan operations.

When the Lion Nathan IT team heard about the powerful new capabilities and features of the upcoming Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, they knew they could potentially leverage the new solution to help meet their goals of consolidation, optimization, and improved service delivery. "However, we never thought we could get an early jump on deployment like we were able to with the help of HP and Microsoft," explains Lion Nathan IT Systems and Applications Manager Jane Howard. "We've worked with HP Services for more than seven years – they are our preferred consulting and infrastructure partner. When HP proposed that we participate in the Microsoft Rapid Deployment Program (RDP) for Exchange Server 2007, we were thrilled."

The proposed RDP featured a 100-mailbox pilot implementation of Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 on HP ProLiant DL585 and DL385 64-bit AMD Opteron™-based servers. The Lion Nathan IT team viewed the Exchange pilot program as a cost-effective way to establish and test a robust new architecture for the firm's critical communications infrastructure. The program would also pave the way for a planned consolidation of 10 remote e-mail servers to just three.

Other goals of the Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 pilot program were to:

- Strengthen disaster-recovery capabilities – Cluster Continuous Replication (CCR) allows a passive Exchange server to be located at a disaster-recovery site with an independent copy of the Exchange database
- Improve scheduling – Calendar Concierge automates meeting scheduling
- Facilitate mobile-device management – Outlook Web Access and other tools improve security and allow users to self-manage mobile devices
- Improve local Microsoft Outlook performance – Cached Exchange Mode shields users from network connection and performance issues
- Provide Enhanced collaboration features enabled by Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 and Microsoft 2007 Office System

Formulating the right recipe takes teamwork

Lion Nathan's IT team worked closely with HP Services consultants to develop a detailed statement of work for the Exchange Server 2007 pilot, including specific milestones. HP Services provided an in-depth architectural design, build guides, test plans, and migration guidelines for the implementation.

According to Howard, HP Services has played a pivotal role in assisting and guiding Lion Nathan in establishing and maximizing the brewer's investment in HP and Microsoft infrastructure. "We worked with HP Services for our original Active Directory, Windows, and Exchange implementations and the overall design of our network," Howard notes. "HP consultants have an excellent understanding of our environment, which makes it easy to work with them and to tackle these challenging infrastructure projects. We have dealt with many other companies in the past, but our relationship with HP is the best by far. They are our preferred consulting vendor and infrastructure partner."

HP, Microsoft, and Lion Nathan team members completed the pilot implementation work in August 2006, resulting in a fully functional installation of Exchange Server 2007 for 100 Lion users. Lion Nathan was able to test critical new Exchange 2007 capabilities and establish the HP server and management infrastructure to support the full organization-wide rollout planned for early 2007.

The Exchange Server 2007 environment runs on a cluster of two HP ProLiant DL585 servers, linked by Cluster Continuous Replication, and running under the Microsoft Windows Server R2 Enterprise Edition. An HP ProLiant DL385 system hosts the Client Access Server and Hub Transport Exchange Server 2007 roles. Lion Nathan uses nearly 130 HP ProLiant and Integrity servers throughout its operations, making the selection of the HP DL585 as a host for Exchange Server 2007 a "no-brainer," according to Lion Windows Systems Team Leader Brett Watkins.

"We run Exchange Server 2003 on ProLiant DL580s and we use several DL585 systems to host our VMware virtual servers," he explains. "We knew that the DL585 offered the 64-bit power to run Exchange Server 2007, plus we love ProLiant manageability, reliability, and scalability. The integration of HP Systems Insight Manager and Integrated Lights Out remote-management features in the HP servers is a big plus that saves us time and effort."

Adding a shot of consolidation – when less is more

Lion Nathan's No.1 target for improvement is 10 e-mail servers scattered across Australia and New Zealand. Many of the firm's critical business applications – including procurement and order entry – depend on e-mail for application-level messaging and workflow-routing alerts.

A study by consulting firm BearingPoint found that the single e-mail servers at Lion's breweries and other facilities represented points of potential failure. To avoid disruption, IT administrators work outside of regular business hours to perform server and application maintenance and updates. The study determined that server consolidation could help Lion reduce this administrative overhead and achieve reductions in hardware lifecycle costs.

Lion Nathan plans to consolidate the remote e-mail servers to the new HP ProLiant DL585 and DL385 servers at its Sydney data center. Cluster Continuous Replication, a high-availability feature of Exchange Server 2007, will provide failover protection to a second Exchange server located at Lion Nathan disaster-recovery site for the centralized environment.

CCR will also allow IT administrators to perform regular Exchange database backups from the passive server and to do server and software maintenance during normal business hours. "We can take a node down any time we need to without impacting Exchange operation," Watkins explains. "That saves time and money."

Stay in touch to keep the business flowing

To produce, market, and sell the large volume of beer, fine wine, RTDs, and spirits that Lion Nathan does requires a sophisticated distribution network and support infrastructure. Lion Nathan administrative and production staff must stay in touch across multiple time zones, be able to easily coordinate schedules, and transfer critical documents. The company's sales representatives – who are constantly on the road visiting pubs, liquor stores, and distributors – need access anywhere, anytime.



An essential part of the Exchange pilot was to test various mobile and remote-access methods. While only a small number took part in the pilot, the new features and capabilities impressed the participants. According to Watkins and Howard, the Exchange Server 2007 test group was particularly excited about new calendar and resource booking features that more closely integrate Exchange and Microsoft Outlook. "For instance, we're beginning to move about 150 meeting rooms into Exchange Server 2007 and Calendar Concierge," Watkins notes. "Scheduling these rooms has always been challenging, and we expect Exchange Server 2007 to help us streamline that process."

Lion Nathan's IT team leaders also liked the new visibility and control offered for administrators and users of mobile devices, such as those powered by Microsoft Windows Mobile. "Users can more easily access e-mail and other documents using Outlook Web Access," Watkins says. "Exchange Server 2007 makes it easier for an administrator to see what mobile devices are out there and any error messages associated with them. The new integration between Outlook and Exchange also improves data security."

Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

- Mobile messaging support
- E-mail lifecycle management
- E-mail archive protection

Primary hardware

- 130 HP ProLiant servers, models DL585, DL385, DL380, DL360
- HP Integrated Lights Out (iLO) ver7.51 Standard 2 remote-management technology
- HP Compaq Business Desktop dc7100 Series
- HP Compaq nc6220 notebook computers
- HP StorageWorks MSL5000 Tape Library with HP SDLT storage media

Primary software

- Microsoft Exchange Server 2007
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 R2 Standard x64 Edition
- Microsoft Office Outlook 2003 and 2007
- HP Systems Insight Manager
- HP ProLiant Essentials Integrated Lights Out
- VMware ESX Server

HP Services

- Consulting and integration, including:
 - Architectural design
 - Test plans
 - Pilot rollout plan
 - Migration guidelines
- 4-hour 24x7 hardware support

For example, if a mobile device is lost or stolen, the user can use Outlook Web Access to wipe out device data remotely – and without help desk support.”

Watkins also likes the new Exchange Server 2007 management console. “Exchange 2007 is definitely easier to manage than Exchange 2003,” he says. “The new Exchange Management Console brings control back into one GUI that’s only two levels deep, as opposed to seven or eight levels in Exchange 2003. From an administrator’s perspective, Exchange 2007 is more intuitive and powerful. It’s going to save us time and make our jobs significantly easier.”

The Lion Nathan IT team is working closely with HP Services to plan for full migration to the Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 environment. According to HP Solutions Architect Anthony Vitnell, “This next phase will include the implementation of Telephony Integration with the Cisco Call Manager environment in order to provide Outlook Voice Access. We’re also going to be piloting an implementation of Microsoft Office Live Communications Server 2005.”

About Lion Nathan

Lion Nathan Ltd. (www.lion-nathan.com) is one of Australasia’s leading beverage companies, encompassing strong positions in the production, marketing, sales, and distribution of beer in Australia and New Zealand – as well as spirits and RTD spirit products in New Zealand and a niche fine-wine business in both countries. The company also has joint venture businesses with Heineken (beer) and Bacardi (white spirits) in Australia. In August 2006, Lion Nathan entered the liquor and RTD market in Australia with the initial launch in South East Queensland of McKenna Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey and its associated RTD products.

To learn more, go to
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