Sudarshan refreshes storage to handle growth

3PAR system is efficient and easy to manage

Industry
Chemicals

Objective
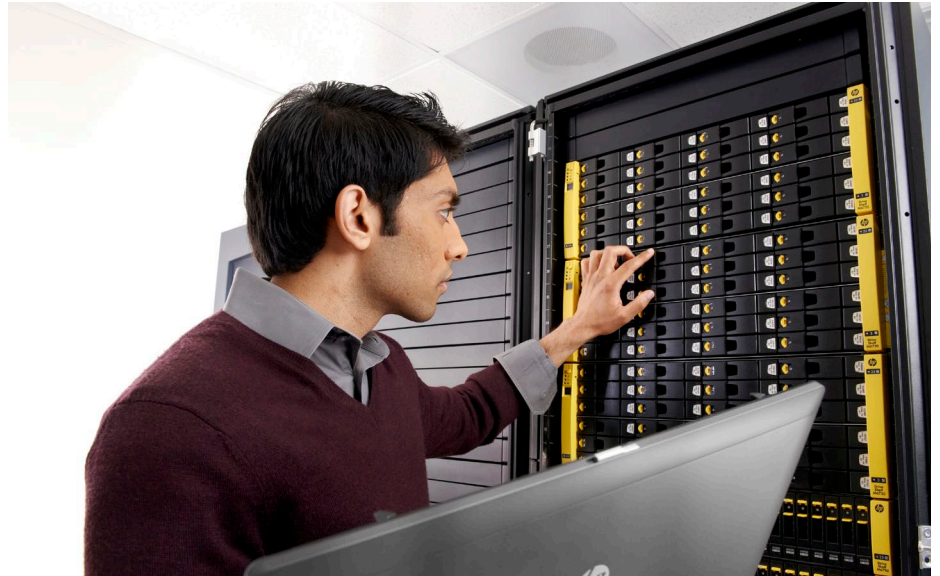Refresh ageing storage to cope with business growth

Approach
Reviewed storage products available in the market from major vendors

IT matters
• Increased performance, for example running an SAP report 30 per cent quicker

• Simplified management of storage, so the company's IT team can handle tasks without requiring external help

• Improved storage efficiency due to the 3PAR thin provisioning capabilities

• Boosted business continuity with active/active controllers

Business matters
• Handled migration to new system smoothly, with zero downtime for the business on its SAP system

• Accelerated the response to requests from the business, due to easier management

SUDARSHAN

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– Uday Hardikar, senior manager – Information Technology, Sudarshan Chemical Industries

Chemicals firm runs SAP system on 3PAR storage

Indian chemicals company Sudarshan needed to update its storage to cope with growth, and to consolidate two systems into one. It chose HP 3PAR for its ease of management and its thin provisioning features, and because HP could deliver a migration with zero downtime. The new storage has improved performance, ensured business continuity, and provided scalability for future projects.

Challenge

Expansion drives storage needs
Sudarshan Chemical Industries is a chemicals company that specialises in colours and pigments. It is the largest pigment supplier in India, as well as the fourth largest in the world, and is expanding rapidly into international markets.

This expansion put increasing demands on the company's storage, and future growth plans meant that more space was needed. Sudarshan also wanted to consolidate two existing systems into one, in order to simplify management.

"Our existing HP EVA storage was ageing and going out of warranty coverage, and we did not have enough capacity available as the amount of data grew," says Uday A Hardikar, senior manager – Information Technology at Sudarshan Chemical Industries. "When we drafted a three-year roadmap, it was one of the areas that needed looking at."

Solution

Zero downtime migration
Sudarshan evaluated the available storage products in the market from major vendors, before choosing a solution based around the HP 3PAR StoreServ 7200 Storage System. It decided to keep its existing HP servers and tape backup, and HP provides 24x7 support under a three-year Proactive Care contract.

"From an IT perspective, there were two key features of 3PAR that were important to me in choosing HP: thin provisioning, and the ease of administration," says Hardikar. "Another factor was that HP could provide seamless migration from our previous storage to the new solution."

Sudarshan uses the HP storage to run its SAP ERP system, including both the production and test environments. The system has around 230 users, who are all based at one site. With the SAP software being used to manage the company's live operations, it was vital that Sudarshan could minimise disruption when it migrated its data from the previous EVA system to the new 3PAR storage.

"Downtime is always critical for any business," says Hardikar. "However, when other vendors came to us with solutions, they would all require some work doing on the data, and would have involved eight to ten hours shutdown.

"With HP, we did the migration with absolutely zero downtime, and without the users even knowing their data had been moved," says Hardikar. "HP team came here and prepared in the first week, and then handled the migration with our people the week after."

Benefits

Faster performance

"With multiple applications being consolidated on to a single storage platform, performance is important to Sudarshan. End-users would notice any slowdowns in poor response times, and processes would take longer to complete, impeding the business's ability to function effectively.

The 3PAR storage provides the speed that is needed by the company, with its ASIC-based architecture maximising performance. The ASICs are custom chips that support workloads, so that the 3PAR controllers are left free to handle input/output requests – ensuring throughput is kept as high as possible.

"Due to the new storage, performance is faster for the SAP system," says Hardikar. "Reports can be run faster – for example, one activity that used to take five hours is now completed in three and half hours, a saving of 30 per cent."

Easier management

Using the 3PAR system, it is simple for Sudarshan's IT team to manage the storage efficiently across multiple applications.

"Due to the easy administration of 3PAR, we are not dependent on HP experts for management and support," says Hardikar. "My system administrators can handle activity requests on their own, which means they can respond faster to the demands of the business."

"With 3PAR, HP has come up with a graphical user interface (GUI) which is very simple and menu-driven," says Hardikar. "The GUI enables us to see clearly what is happening and to make changes."

Advanced features

Due to the 3PAR thin provisioning capability, Sudarshan can maximise the efficiency of the 3PAR storage, and get the maximum usable space out of the system. Disk capacity is dedicated and configured when required as the data is written, and the 3PAR thin provisioning software manages one pool of resources. To increase efficiency, 3PAR uses a small 16 KB allocation unit.

"Our system administrators can manage the thin provisioning on our own, without technical help from HP, to allocate or remove space whenever we want," says Hardikar.

"3PAR thin provisioning provides capabilities that were not available in competitors' products."

Sudarshan uses the 3PAR symmetric active/active controllers to manage workloads across the storage's two nodes, and to improve business continuity. As the load increases on one controller, it can pass workloads to the other node, to avoid any short-term overloading. Additionally, one node can take over from the other if required in the case of a hardware failure.

Customer solution at a glance

Applications
SAP

Hardware
- HP 3PAR StoreServ 7200 Storage System
- HP Integrity rx2600 Servers
- HP StoreEver MSL4048 Tape Libraries

HP services
- Data migration services
- Proactive Care 24x7 support

The new storage uses less power than the previous system, and Hardikar has calculated that energy consumption has now reduced by around USD$29k per year. This also means that less heat is generated in the data centre, reducing the load on the air conditioning systems.

Good understanding
"HP have a good understanding of customer requirements, and their planning is good," says Hardikar. "We work closely together.

"HP differentiates itself in how the sales team stays involved at the end of the project, which was very good," continues Hardikar. "Normally, sales people leave and we deal with the delivery team – but at HP, sales and delivery go hand in hand, which is better for us."

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Sudarshan is planning to move other applications onto the 3PAR storage, including its customer relationship management (CRM) system, and to refresh its servers. Within the company's next financial year, it also plans to take advantage of the 3PAR system's scalability to help support virtualisation.

Hardikar comments, "We are ready for any new projects that might come up, or acquisitions in the future – the storage has the performance and capacity to cope.

"I'm happy with the service of HP and the performance of the product - we are in a win-win situation with the IT benefits of 3PAR," concludes Hardikar. "I look forward to working with HP on other migration projects in the future."

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