

Case study

Nilkamal migrates from IBM to HP for critical SAP applications



Leading manufacturer replaces IBM with HP to power growth, save space, and reduce TCO

Industry

Manufacturing & Retail

Objective

Migrate business-critical SAP applications and databases to a more reliable, higher performance infrastructure supported by a leading channel partner

Approach

Closely considered IBM and HP proposals, but chose HP based on its comprehensive solution, price, performance, and strength of its local channel partner

IT matters

- Provides improved performance and reliability for business-critical SAP applications
- Consolidates IT infrastructure, saving valuable data center floor space, and reducing cooling and power costs by approximately 30% over previous IBM infrastructure
- Enables rapid deployment and scalability for new applications and capabilities
- Improves backup and restore times by up to 40%

Business matters

- Upgrade reduces risk of business process failure and provides powerful platform to manage explosive growth and regional expansion
- Delivers single view of corporate-wide data from multiple business divisions and sales partners
- Supports seamless integration with 300-member sales force and closer customer ties
- Renewed support for SAP infrastructure from key partners—including SAP, Oracle, HP, and Unified Data-Tech—reduces business risk



“We don’t want suppliers for our company; we want partners. HP and its partner Unified Data-Tech represent a two-way relationship that is a benefit for us and them. It was also important that the HP Converged Infrastructure solution offered much better value for the money.”

— Karan Doshi, project manager, Nilkamal Ltd.

Nilkamal Ltd., India’s leading producer of affordable and durable furniture for homes and offices, relied on SAP ERP applications to manage its operations across India, and coordinate with partners around the world. However, recent dynamic growth put increased demands on the aging IBM platform supporting the SAP applications and posed the risk of downtime and business process failures. Nilkamal chose an HP Converged Infrastructure solution for its business-critical SAP applications. This consolidated IT infrastructure improves performance, reliability, and scalability while saving data center space and reducing cooling and power costs.

“Home is the most important place in the world” believes Nilkamal Ltd., India’s leading producer of molded furniture, maker of material handling products, home decor retailing, custom molded products and service products for the hospitality industry. Best known for its affordable and durable furniture for homes and offices, Nilkamal has followed a dynamic growth path that has included the introduction of 20 @home retail stores across India and strong expansion of its export markets in the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas.

While India suffered the same economic downturn as the rest of the world, its economy showed remarkable resilience by rebounding strongly in 2009 and 2010. Nilkamal, which holds a 39% market share in the molded furniture segment, experienced strong growth across all of its business divisions long before many of its competitors. The company has seen its @home stores become a trusted brand and is committed to expanding this chain of stores in the next several years.

Continued growth depends on business-critical SAP

Nilkamal has relied on SAP enterprise resource planning (ERP) applications since 2004 to manage the operation of its five divisions, 33 warehouses, eight manufacturing plants, and 49 regional offices across India, as well as coordinate with partners around the world. However, increased demands on the aging IBM platform supporting the SAP R/3 4.7 applications and the approaching end of support for both SAP 4.7 and its IBM systems drove Nilkamal to make a difficult, but inevitable decision.

The longer Nilkamal stayed with the old SAP infrastructure, the greater the increased risk of downtime and business process failures. The IBM Power 520 and 550 servers supporting the SAP 4.7 applications had reached end of life and were scheduled to be withdrawn from the market in early 2011. “Hardware performance was becoming an issue,” notes Karan Doshi, Nilkamal IT project manager. “We were experiencing server failures for no apparent reason. It didn’t happen very often, but any failure in these critical systems is unacceptable.”

Beyond the declining reliability of its legacy SAP infrastructure, Nilkamal needed to change the status quo in order to better manage its rapidly expanding business. Not only was it opening several new @home retail outlets each year, but the firm was in the process of building a new manufacturing plant in Hosur, India, to support its entry into the mattress business.

All manufacturing facilities are linked to the firm’s Mumbai headquarters where SAP ERP is used to centrally control production planning, scheduling, and materials management. The upgrade to SAP ECC 6.0 would allow Nilkamal to strengthen its use of SAP to help manage retail store operations and provide real-time information to its 300-strong sales force through linkage with cloud-based Salesforce.com.

Strong channel partner and clear roadmap made for easy choice

While the Nilkamal selection team met with representatives from both IBM and HP, the HP team distinguished itself in its commitment to providing a complete Converged Infrastructure solution that addressed every requirement. The HP sales team joined forces with HP channel partner Unified Data-Tech Solutions of Mumbai to provide the customer with a clear roadmap for the infrastructure refresh and migration from SAP 4.7 to 6.0 and Oracle 9i to 10g.

Unified Data-Tech had a five-year history with Nilkamal prior to the SAP infrastructure upgrade. “We were already very familiar with Nilkamal’s infrastructure and security requirements,” says Unified’s director Hiren Mehta. “We sat down with the Nilkamal SAP group and really worked to understand their goals and build confidence. The HP proposal was very thorough and helped make the customer’s decision an easy one.”

Nilkamal’s Karan Doshi agrees that the HP proposal made the firm’s choice clear. “We had the entire HP Indian team, as well as their channel partner Unified, in our offices,” he notes. HP servers host almost 50% of SAP solutions worldwide, with more than

60,000 installations and 25,000 customers. “We believed their total solution was right for us. HP provided us with what we needed and provided a better value for the money than IBM. Our senior management, of course, understood that both IBM and HP are market leaders. HP’s partnership with Unified definitely helped to reassure us because we were already very familiar with Unified and knew we would get a very high level of service.”

Converged Infrastructure delivers power in less space

The HP Converged Infrastructure solution is designed to save space in Nilkamal’s increasingly crowded data center, as well as conserve power and cooling resources. Most of the solution fits in a single rack, including a single HP BladeSystem c7000 Enclosure loaded with HP Integrity BL860c i2 and HP ProLiant BL460c G7 Blade Servers. HP Virtual Connect provides a virtualized network fabric that allows Nilkamal to easily add, move and change network and storage connections in minutes instead of days.

An HP 4400 Enterprise Virtual Array (EVA4400) provides a fibre channel SAN to support the growing database needs of the Nilkamal SAP applications. HP Data Protector software in combination with the EVA4400 and an HP MSL4048 fibre channel tape library provides fast, cost-effective backup and disaster recovery protection. Backup and file restore times have been reduced by up to 40% over the previous Tivoli system.

Multi-stage deployment minimizes risk

Nilkamal implemented its new SAP infrastructure in stages to help reduce the risk of downtime and business interruptions. The first stage, carried out in early 2011, consisted of installation and testing of the new HP servers, storage, and software. HP Services provided implementation and training to the

Nilkamal SAP team for the switch from IBM AIX to HP-UX 11i v3 operating system. Unified set up HP Data Protector, EVA4400, and the HP tape library.

Nilkamal worked with HP Services and its SAP partner, Bristlecone, to install its preexisting SAP 4.7 applications on the new HP infrastructure. The plan was to minimize disruptions by making sure the legacy SAP applications were stable on the new hardware before attempting to move to SAP 6.0. The final migrations from SAP 4.7 to 6.0 and from Oracle 9i to 10g were carried out in late 2011 without a hitch.

SAP ECC 6.0 applications run on the following HP infrastructure:

- SAP ECC 6.0 production runs on a single HP Integrity rx2800 i2 rack server equipped with two Intel Itanium quad core processors.
- Business Objects (BO) and Process Integration (PI) run on ProLiant BL460c G7 Blade Servers equipped with two Intel Xeon quad core processors under Windows Server 2008.
- Business intelligence (BI) for both Nilkamal @home retail store operations and other Nilkamal divisions runs on a single Integrity BL860c i2 server blade equipped with two Intel Itanium quad core processors running HP Integrity Virtual Machines using HP-UX 11i v3.
- Development and quality assurance, SAP Solution Manager, and backup services are provided on a single Integrity BL860c i2 server blade, also using the HP Integrity Virtual Machine capability.
- Oracle 10g database and SAP ECC 6.0 application server run on two Integrity BL860c i2 server blades with HP-UX 11i v3 and linked by HP Serviceguard clustering software.

The infrastructure supporting all of Nilkamal's SAP ECC 6.0 applications run in a single rack in the company's Mumbai data center. Server consolidation provided by the HP blade architecture enabled the firm to save an entire rack, freeing critical and costly floor space for other purposes. The HP c-Class Integrity and ProLiant blades incorporate three innovations that lower costs and enhance productivity: Thermal Logic, for reducing power consumption; Insight Control, for automating management and provisioning; and, Virtual Connect, for simplifying LAN

and SAN connections. The conversion from IBM to HP infrastructure is saving Nilkamal approximately 30% in power and cooling costs, yet providing greater performance to handle increased SAP workloads.

Says Nilkamal's Doshi. "We definitely felt a higher level of commitment from HP and Unified. This, in combination with a clear migration roadmap, customer references, and solution performance and value made selecting HP over IBM an easy choice to make."

Customer at a glance

Application

Enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management, databases, data warehouse, data backup, and disaster recovery

Hardware

- 4 HP Integrity BL860c i2 Blade Servers each with two quad core CPUs
- 1 HP Integrity rx2800 i2 Servers with two quad core CPUs
- 5 HP ProLiant BL460c G7 Blade Servers each with two quad core CPUs
- 1 HP BladeSystem c7000 Enclosure
- 2 HP 8/24 SAN Switches
- 1 HP 4400 Enterprise Virtual Array
- 1 HP MSL4048 Tape Library
- HP Virtual Connect Flex-10 Ethernet Module
- 1 HP Ultrium LTO Gen 5 Tape Drive
- 1 HP D2600 Disk Enclosure

Software

- SAP ECC 6.0
- HP-UX 11i v3 operating system
- HP Integrity Virtual Machines
- HP Command View EVA
- HP Data Protector 6.2
- HP Serviceguard clustering software
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 Standard Edition
- Oracle Database 10g
- VMware virtualization
- Citrix
- Symantec anti-virus protection

HP Services

- Infrastructure migration services provided by HP Technical Services
- Backup solution migration provided by HP partner Unified Data-Tech
- SAP upgrade support from Bristlecone India Ltd.

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