FUJITSU

Case study
Coles Supermarkets

"Fujitsu have helped us deploy enabling technology that increases productivity.
We rely on their responsiveness and respect their unrivalled professionalism"

Rod Bloore, Manager of Instore Solutions, Coles Supermarkets

The customer

Country: Australia
Industry: Retail
Founded: 1960
Employees:110,000
Website: www.coles.com.au

coles

The challenge

The Server and storage infrastructure located at 700 supermarkets was reaching the end of its useful life. The project goals were to upgrade all sites with a high-availability Server cluster that could be monitored and managed from Coles' data centre. Any systems outage was unacceptable because of the impact on company revenue and the negative reaction this customer inconvenience would cause.

The solution

Coles' had been impressed with the reliability of Intel powered Servers provided by Fujitsu in the past. A pair of Servers configured as a high-availability failover cluster combined with an ETERNUS storage area network met design specifications and provided redundancy between point-of-sale systems on the shop-floor and back-office solutions used for management and reporting.

The customer

The Coles group employs more than 110,000 staff and trades as Coles Supermarkets, Coles Express and Coles Liquor. Retail operations are delivered from more than 2400 locations across Australia. The Australian retail landscape is competitive, with percentage points in market share aggressively pursued by competitors. Australian consumers are keen to embrace new technology with point-of-sales technology reducing Coles operating costs and improving customer satisfaction levels. These are both important drivers in growing the company's turnover and profitability. The vast size of Australia presents Coles with challenges in delivering high quality supply chain systems, while ensuring fulfilment costs are kept to a bare minimum. Because of the tyranny of distance, communication between stores and data centres is mission critical. This improves productivity and provides greater efficiencies in the day-to-day operation of the supermarkets.

The challenge

Coles Supermarkets needed to refresh their server and storage technology. Coles' current Server and storage infrastructure solution was reaching the end of its useful life, with management aware of reliability and uptime concerns. Newly released versions of Microsoft's Server operating system offered features delivering drastic improvements in remote management and systems monitoring. Any failure preventing point of sales systems processing retail sales transactions was untenable. Office systems used for day-to-day management of each supermarket were mission critical and had to be ready to meet user demands at all times. The challenge could be met by building a highly available solution with redundancy designed from the ground up. Retail and back office systems had to meet the demands users and customers placed upon them, today and in the future.

The solution

In a hard fought tendering process, Fujitsu was selected to supply and install systems that included out-of-hours installation and rapid response, on-site maintenance services. Virtualisation was used extensively to build highly available host Servers, which could fail over to ensure retail service delivery was provided without interruption. Overall system performance improved with intensive processing tasks completed in half the time compared with Coles' previous technology. Fujitsu's high performance ETERNUS Storage Array Network protects vital data and delivers high performance, rounding out the solution.

The benefit

- Risk reduced in delivery of service to retail customers
- Productivity times improved with faster processing
- Future proof design
- A single vendor can provide optimum service levels in line with the unique requirements of the Supermarket chain

Products and services

- Fujitsu Primergy RX300-S6 Intel Xeon powered Server
- Fujitsu ETERNUS DX60 Storage Area Network
- High Level Engineering Design and Implementation Services
- On-Site Implementation and Support Services
- Consultation Services

The benefit

Coles Supermarkets must offer outstanding customer service to customers in the fiercely competitive Australian retail marketplace. A Server and storage upgrade delivered improvements in performance that operational staff quantified in orders of magnitude. Regular batch tasks took nearly half the time after the replacement of existing hardware. Coles' needed a partner with the capability to scale and deliver comprehensive support to their network covering all points of Australia's vast geography. Fujitsu could provide mission critical service, able to meet both retail and office application requirements. Fujitsu could demonstrate their expertise and skills previously provided to retailers in Australia and key overseas markets. Fujitsu hardware had proved more reliable than their competitors Server offerings based on benchmarks Coles' internal auditing processes had collated. Fujitsu backed their solution with an on-site warranty that sharpened the value proposition and the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for Coles. The company benefitted from ensuring a more reliable production environment with outages scheduled, and accordingly planned for. This proved a boon to the IT Staff with operating and software patching scheduled at regular intervals. Coles' takes its social responsibilities seriously and works with staff and vendors to ensure sustainable solutions are deployed company wide. The Fujitsu refresh has delivered lower power and cooling usage and reduced energy input costs across the Supermarket chain.

- High availability systems have mitigated the risk failure posed in delivering processing retail services to customers
- The technology refresh has allowed proactive central management and monitoring across the network
- Technology is sized to easily grow depending upon future needs
- Cloud readiness is an intrinsic design objective

Conclusion

The critical determiner in swaying the selection committee towards a Fujitsu solution was the outstanding reliability of previous Servers supplied to the retailer. In critical comparisons between the failure rates of Servers deployed in the field, Fujitsu logged the lowest Mean Time Between Failure (MTBF) results compared with newer models provided by IBM and HP. An important design goal was to improve system availability and reduce the chance of downtime causing inconvenience to customers and damaging the retailer's bottom line. Fujitsu's RX300-S6 Primergy Servers, configured as a high-availability failover pair, were chosen for installation in 700 sites nationally. For data storage, a Fujitsu ETERNUS DX60 high-performance storage array was selected. Each Server was configured with a hardened Microsoft Windows operating system and retail specific applications installed and tested. The solution has exceeded the design goals and performed flawlessly since commissioning.

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About Fujitsu

Fujitsu Australia Limited is a full service provider of information technology and communications solutions. We partner with our customers to consult, design, build, operate and support business solutions. From strategic consulting to application and infrastructure solutions and services, Fujitsu has earned a reputation as the single supplier of choice for leading corporate and government organisations.