



Business challenge

Canon Marketing Japan Inc. was looking to boost employee productivity and satisfaction by improving response times for vital information systems.

Transformation

The company deployed a software-defined storage infrastructure based on IBM technology, enabling 10-fold faster processing.

Business benefits

554-hour

saving across the workforce on daily wait times with faster online processing

Simplifies

infrastructure, reducing admin and maximizing value of IT investments

Cuts

power and space requirements with a more dense, energy-efficient configuration

Canon Marketing Japan Inc. boosts business efficiency with tenfold faster information integration

Canon Marketing Japan Inc. was established as one of the Canon Group companies to oversee the electronics giant's worldwide marketing activities and develop solutions combining Canon's products and IT services.

“Using IBM FlashSystem, we have reduced total wait times by 554 hours across our workforce per day.”

—Junichi Bodajji, section manager, Canon Marketing Japan Inc.

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Protecting business-critical processes

The IT headquarters at Canon Marketing Japan is responsible for the management and operation of mission-critical business applications, used daily by approximately 4,000 of the 18,000 employees across various Canon Group companies.

To address the issue of increasing wait times caused by the concentration of large volumes of transactions, Canon Marketing Japan created a mechanism to allow mission-critical systems to be utilized as data warehouses by the company's information systems.

"IT headquarters prepared a data mart that divides up the collected data according to use, helping users rapidly define and execute queries and retrieve the information they require," explains Junichi Bodaiji, section manager at Canon Marketing Japan Inc. "In addition to supporting management tasks, the data retrieved in this manner is utilized for daily operations and marketing, and so has become an essential tool in the business activities of the company."



SQL queries are used to process the data that is extracted, and the more complex the command, the longer it takes to process. For complex cases, processing could take several hours, depending on the time of the request and the level of demand from employees.

"It became normal for us to plan work around waiting for data processing queries to complete," says Junichi Bodaiji. "In addition to the peak at the beginning of each month, most of the data marts accumulate data for a year, so the system load gradually increases from January to December."

Junichi Bodaiji continues: "In the last three months of the year, the deterioration in response times was particularly severe. Until now, we periodically improved response times by regularly upgrading the system. During the latest upgrade, we doubled processing performance. But because the data and transaction volumes far exceeded our estimates, the response times during peak periods started to deteriorate sooner than we had expected. Considering both user convenience and productivity, we saw that the situation could not continue as it was."

With an average of approximately 15,000 transactions daily, and an excess of 50,000 transactions at the peak period at the beginning of each month, Canon Marketing Japan targeted a tenfold increase in the speed of data processing. The company recognized that adopting flash storage could be the answer, as it would enable data to be read from databases at much higher speeds than traditional storage, to significantly improve the performance of the infrastructure as a whole.

Next-generation technology

Canon Marketing Japan selected IBM FlashSystem all-flash storage, designed for high performance.

“We put a particular focus on response time,” says Junichi Bodaiji. “During testing, the average response time we achieved during the peak period at the beginning of the month was just 60 seconds, so we selected IBM FlashSystem storage.”

Canon Marketing Japan created a software-defined storage infrastructure by deploying IBM Spectrum Control™ and IBM Spectrum Virtualize™ solutions to manage its new FlashSystem and existing IBM Storwize storage devices. With these tools in place, the company was able to implement IBM FlashSystem with minimal changes to existing configuration, a key advantage.

Junichi Bodaiji remarks: “By adding FlashSystem to an existing virtualized storage environment, we maximize the value of existing investments and introduce additional cost reductions. FlashSystem is compatible with IBM Spectrum solutions, and in our view is superior to competing solutions on the market today.”

When implementing IBM FlashSystem, Canon Marketing Japan needed to migrate data used by the business on a daily basis, which meant that it needed to minimize downtime. As a result, the company chose to divide the 40 TB of data to be migrated into two parts, with preparatory migration steps carried out over a month, and the main stages over just two days.

Surpassing expectations

Since installing the IBM FlashSystem solution, Canon Marketing Japan has reduced daily wait times by 554 hours across its workforce, reduced its use of floorspace and decreased power consumption.

Jun Miyazaki adds: “We feel that the results match up to what the testing promised. When we surveyed users, they told us that processing tasks that previously took around one minute can now be completed in 10 to 20 seconds. Equally, a complex sales report that previously took a whole morning to process can now be executed in about 30 minutes.”

Looking at usage across Canon Marketing Japan, the company confirms that wait times have been significantly reduced.

Junichi Bodaiji concludes: “For our previous system, we found that the total wait time for all users was around 668 hours across our workforce. Using IBM FlashSystem, we have reduced total wait times by 554 hours per day for all employees or 83 percent, significantly improving business efficiency.”

Solution components

- IBM® FlashSystem®
- IBM Spectrum Control™
- IBM Spectrum Virtualize™
- IBM Storwize®

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