Major utility organization

Enabling business growth for all services with fast, robust mainframe platform for SAP applications

Overview

The need
To combat lengthening response times for its mission-critical SAP business systems, this major utility targeted a scalable IT infrastructure to support its end-to-end processes.

The solution
The organization migrated its SAP landscape to IBM® zEnterprise® EC12 servers running IBM DB2® for z/OS®, providing the scalability, performance and availability to grow without harming service quality.

The benefit
Today, the utility organization has reduced response times for key SAP applications by an average of 50 percent, enabling it to manage key compliance and human resources processes up to eight-times faster.

This major utility aims to expand its services to new regions in its domestic market while continually enhancing customer services. To achieve these goals, the company wanted to ensure that it could onboard and manage new suppliers and customers without impacting service quality.
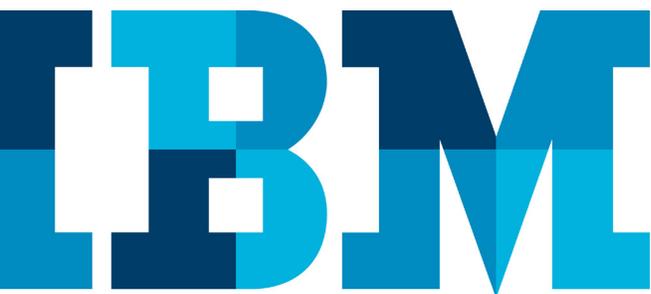
The spokesperson for the utility organization explains: "Increasing our customer base generates financial benefits for the business, but it also presents operational challenges.

"Like many leading utilities, we rely on centralized SAP solutions to manage our end-to-end business processes. As the number of transactions on our books increased, the load on the SAP applications rose. This reduced response times for business users, harming our operational efficiency and threatening overall service quality."

Selecting a fresh SAP solution platform
To solve the challenge, the company decided to upgrade its SAP solutions – used by thousands of employees across the business – to the latest versions. The organization targeted a fresh IT infrastructure to support the new requirements.

Fast-growing enterprises must react quickly to ensure that they can continue to deliver high-quality customer services. "With IBM solutions supporting our mission-critical applications, we can keep the business running smoothly – even as the number of customers and suppliers increases," says a spokesperson for the major utility organization.

Solution components

Hardware
- IBM® zEnterprise® EC12
- IBM System Storage® DS8870
- IBM System Storage SAN40B-4 Fibre Channel switch
- IBM System Storage TS3500 Tape Library

Software
- IBM DB2® 10 for z/OS®
- IBM System z® Solution Edition for Enterprise Linux
- IBM System z Solution Edition for SAP
- IBM z/OS V1.13
- IBM z/VM® V6.3
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux

Services
- IBM Lab Services
- IBM Migration Services

Applications
- SAP ERP
- SAP Supplier Relationship Management
- SAP Business Warehouse
- SAP Enterprise Portal
- SAP Process Integration

The spokesperson continues: "To meet the system requirements of the new SAP applications, we sought an IT platform with higher performance, greater scalability and availability. Initially, we considered renewing our distributed server and storage environment. However, when we heard the IBM proposal, we realized it had the potential to deliver far greater value to the business and reduce the total cost of ownership for our IT infrastructure."

Rock-solid reliability from IBM System z®

After a thorough review of offerings from multiple solution vendors, the utility organization selected IBM zEnterprise EC12 servers virtualized with IBM z/VM®, and running the IBM z/OS® and Red Hat Enterprise Linux operating systems.

"We were already using an IBM System z server to host our billing system and some of our line-of-business applications, so we were familiar with the rock-solid reliability of the platform," says the spokesperson. "Part of the IBM proposal involved transforming our existing System z server into a disaster recovery environment for our enterprise billing systems, enabling us to maximize the value of our investment in the platform and deliver assured business continuity to our users."

High performance with IBM DB2®

Next, the company turned its attention to the database software for the new SAP application platform.

"Growth in our SAP ERP environment meant that our database had exploded to more than 1.4 terabytes, which had implications for our expenditure on storage," continues the spokesperson. "After carefully weighing our options, we decided to migrate to IBM DB2 for z/OS on the IBM System z platform. In addition to offering the levels of data compression we had targeted, the deep compatibility between IBM and SAP solutions gave us confidence that the migration would be smooth and straightforward."

Strong partnership

Working together with IBM Lab Services and IBM Migration Services, the company implemented new IBM zEnterprise EC12 servers connected to IBM System Storage® DS8870 disk arrays on a storage area network centered on an IBM System Storage SAN40B-4 Fibre Channel SAN switch.

To provide a new business continuity option both for the SAP applications and for its legacy mainframe workload, the organization upgraded its existing IBM System z server to act as a secondary production environment, and performs regular backups to a new IBM System Storage TS3500 Tape Library.

> *"Without a doubt, our SAP and IBM solutions provide the headroom we need to accommodate significant business growth."*
>
> — Spokesperson, major utility organization

"Before we could complete the migration, we needed to ensure that we had applied all of the latest SAP Support Packages," says the spokesperson. "Advice from the IBM teams was invaluable in streamlining this stage of the project. Thanks to guidance and expertise from IBM, we completed the project on time and within budget."

Today, the major utility organization runs SAP ERP software with applications for finance, controlling, materials management, treasury and risk management, corporate finance management, funds management, project system, mobile asset management and human resources on the IBM System z platform. For business intelligence and compliance reporting, the company uses the SAP Business Warehouse application, and now manages suppliers and trading partners with the latest version of the SAP Supplier Relationship Management application.

Ready for growth

With its SAP business processes now running on a resilient, high-performance IBM System z server platform, the organization can safely upgrade its SAP solutions without any reduction in service quality – enabling it to support a growing number of customers and suppliers.

"In the past, IT performance threatened to limit our growth – today, that challenge is a thing of the past," explains the spokesperson. "For example, our pay slip batch used to take about 16 hours every month. Using the IBM System z platform for our SAP solutions, monthly pay slip calculations take just two hours – eight-times faster."

Enabling greater business efficiency

The spokesperson adds: "Overall, we have seen a 50 percent decrease in our SAP application response times for business users. This greater responsiveness for mission-critical business systems, combined with the improvements that we have seen in batch processing, enables our employees to work at peak efficiency."

Cutting costs, increasing resilience

By selecting IBM DB2 databases for its SAP application data, the company is reaping the financial benefits of hardware data compression.

"IBM DB2 for z/OS has helped compress our data from 1.4 terabytes to 790 gigabytes," says the spokesperson. "With this 43 percent reduction in our database storage requirements, we can defer investment in additional disk capacity, reducing our operational costs.

"Reduced storage requirements have shrunk our QA refresh process from 48 hours to 12 hours, strengthening business resiliency. What's more, our compact IT footprint has reduced power and cooling requirements, delivering further cost savings that we can redirect to improve other aspects of the business."

The spokesperson concludes: "With the latest IBM and SAP solutions powering our business, we are ready for growth. As the next step, we plan to build on our close collaboration with IBM to further enhance our SAP solutions, and prepare for the next phases of our expansion effort."

For more information

To learn more about IBM solutions, contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit us at: **ibm.com**/software/systemz

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