

Hewlett Packard Enterprise



Start your engines

Lucas Oil keeps pace with growth while lowering TCO and boosting systems uptime

Objective

Consolidate systems to maximize productivity, growth, and systems uptime while keeping an eye on the bottom line

Approach

Engage with HPE Partner PCM to architect a virtualization solution, network upgrades, and disaster recovery

IT Matters

- Delivers 7:1 server virtualization allowing for decommissioning of legacy servers
- Boosts systems uptime with a 3-node configuration, eliminating single point of failure
- Paves the way for business-wide disaster recovery environment
- Speeds time to new servers and services by 10x with virtual machine architecture

Business Matters

- Offers a predictable path to upgrades and refreshes with accurate pricing and quoting
- Lowers TCO by 50% vs. competitor's solutions
- Saves substantially on power and cooling requirements
- Relieves strain on IT department, reclaiming their time for forward-looking projects



Work hard, play hard

If there's a market segment that exemplifies the "work hard, play hard" attitude that Americans have cultivated so carefully for the last century, it has to be the automotive industry. United States citizens have a love affair with the car that borders on the obsessive, so it's no wonder that entire business ecosystems have survived and thrived here throughout the past 100 years.

One player making great strides in both the American truck stop industry as well as the auto racing industry is Lucas Oil. Starting his business out of the back of a truck with the simple philosophy of producing the best line of combustion engine lubricants and

additives, Forrest Lucas and his company have one of the fastest growing businesses in the consumer automotive industry today. Its line of premium oils, greases, and other problem-solving products are the result of innovative research and development.

Many needs, one IT department

Besides its growing product line, the company also sponsors a series of motorsports and other competitions, participates in high profile philanthropic activities, and owns the naming rights to the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana, home to the Colts. It's a dizzying array of projects that keeps the Lucas Oil's two-man IT department constantly on its feet.

“At the end of the day, we don’t have to worry so much anymore. I’m not constantly checking my phone on weekends, and if we do run into an issue, we have the best support team I can imagine.”

– Garrett Geisert, IT Administrator at Lucas Oil

“We’ve always been proud of the fact that we have a lot on our plates at Lucas Oil,” says Garrett Geisert, IT Administrator at Lucas Oil. “It creates an interesting complexity for IT, but we always rise to the challenge.”

Challenge

Down with downtime

Until recently, Lucas Oil was almost entirely a Dell shop. With its environment built mostly on single application-per-server style IT, it was a model that worked until growth and complexity found Geisert and team looking for ways to consolidate and simplify.

When the infrastructure started to show its age, Geisert began seeking solutions to improve Lucas Oil’s systems availability and increase uptime. “Our previous environment was beginning to create a drag on business,” Geisert recalls. “If we had a single server with a bad hard drive or blown power supply, it meant kicking of all users of that application until we had the problem fixed. For us, it could mean shutting down anything from a basic file server to HR to full-on Adobe Photoshop graphics.”

To prevent further business disruption, Geisert began researching making the move to a virtualized environment. Initially, Lucas Oil approached Dell for a quote. Based on his online research, and a general understanding of what gear he would use to build a virtualized platform, Geisert prepared to put together an upgrade plan to present to his boss. There was a major problem, though. “The quotes from Dell were coming back with numbers about 200% over their list prices,” Geisert says. “We were really in the mindset to make some big purchases, but the quote process was becoming a big problem.”

Solution

Partners that live up to the name

Simultaneously, Lucas Oil was engaged with technology partner PCM on the unrelated deployment of a small wireless network. During a casual conversation about his frustrations about the virtualization project, PCM’s Heather Hammond suggested looking into solutions from HPE. “Heather said she had a good relationship with some specialists inside HPE, and offered to set up a meeting,” Geisert remembers. “We’re a small company, and we can’t really afford to make

big technology mistakes we can't undo. So we were open to the idea, because we just weren't feeling supported by our previous vendor."

As a value-added direct marketer, PCM delivers technology products, services, and solutions to businesses, government and educational institutions and individual consumers. PCM is also an HPE Business Partner with multiple certificates and authorizations, including enterprise authorizations for network, security, and storage, as well as specialist accreditations for systems engineering and integration.

After meeting with PCM and HPE experts, Geisert was feeling hopeful about Lucas Oil's IT challenges. "We had gone in with a bad taste in our mouths after dealing with our previous vendor," Geisert says. "And suddenly with PCM and HPE we had this feeling of having technology partners that had our best interests at heart."

Right-sized solutions

In fact the systems Geisert was initially looking at for his virtualization project were much more expensive than what Lucas Oil ended up with. "PCM and HPE came back to me and suggested a more powerful system that would actually meet our needs better while costing about two-thirds less than the competition," Geisert explains. "We're not used to our technology partners trying to save us money while solving our problems, but that's exactly what we have with PCM and HPE."

Lucas Oil chose a combination of HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen9 Servers for high density general-purpose computing and HPE MSA 2040 performance-optimized SAN with flexible connectivity options and support for flash media.

Benefits

Consolidation drives availability, TCO gains

The HPE server and storage configuration is exactly what Geisert was looking for in a virtualization platform. "Now, instead of having a single point of failure, we've built a three-node system that can sustain an outage without anybody ever knowing," Geisert says. "And since we virtualized on our HPE ProLiant DL360 servers and HPE MSA 2040 SAN, management isn't concerned about availability anymore, because we haven't had an outage yet. Actually, we did have one outage in the last year but it was because of Google's file servers, not ours. It's sure been nice not having to tell people they can't access their systems."

Virtualizing on HPE servers and storage has had significant benefits in other areas of the Lucas Oil business. "We're currently about halfway through our virtualization project, and already we're seeing huge savings in power and cooling," Geisert explains. "Our virtualization ratio is about 7:1 right now, meaning we can decommission old servers as we virtualize more machines and consolidate them onto HPE ProLiant DL360s. We've already shut down three of our old servers, and we'll continue to shut down more as we progress on our virtualization journey."

Networking and beyond

For Lucas Oil, the virtualization project was a perfect example of a right-sized solution. So much so, in fact, that when Geisert began exploring some network upgrades, he reached out to his trusted partners at PCM. "Because we trust their advice and their honesty, we just came to PCM and asked about upgrading our network, and they came back to us recommending the HPE 5412r z12 Switch Series to fix some of our communications issues, and we've been thrilled with it," Geisert explains.

Customer at a glance

Hardware

- HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen9 Servers
- HPE MSA 2040 SAN
- HPE 5412r ZL2 Switch Series
- HPE ProDesk series desktops
- HPE Elite Notebook series laptops
- HPE Aruba Instant Access Point Series

HPE Partner

- PCM, Inc.

Software

- Microsoft SQL Server
- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft Windows Server
- Adobe Photoshop

Services

- HPE Proactive Care

Modular and programmable, the HPE 5412r is another step toward meeting the growth and scalability challenges Lucas Oil's IT department daily faces as the company continues to expand into new product and marketing opportunities.

Relationships matter

The supportive relationship between Lucas Oil and PCM continues to play an important role as upgrades and refreshes are necessary across the business. Lucas Oil recently began replacing aging desktop PCs with HPE ProDesk desktops, and opted to refresh its laptops with HPE Elite Notebooks, and is on the path to doing the same with its end-of-life monitors and printers. The team is also looking at designing and deploying an HPE disaster recovery solution in the coming year.

"The easiest way to explain this is that HPE and PCM really want to be our partners, and that relationship is so good, that we're going to end up having HPE extend into every area of our business," Geisert sums up. "At the end of the day, we don't have to worry so much anymore. I'm not constantly checking my phone on weekends, and if we do run into an issue, we have the best support team I can imagine. I would like to express my appreciation to the account team—Michael Boudreau, Don DuBose, Wesly Williamson and Heather Hammond at PCM and Leo Hum at HPE—they are always available with solutions and answers, even when it's just ideas I'd like information on that we may not even be ready to pursue"

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