



## IT Gården: green IT pioneer

Swedish Infrastructure-as-a-Service provider roots thriving business in HPE solutions

### Objective

Enable continuous expansion of “green” data centers and serve more customers

### Approach

Link eight data centers with multiple customer sites using HPE FlexFabric Architecture, including HPE switches and HPE management software

### IT Matters

- Maintenance reduced to hours versus days, without scheduled outages
- On-boarding new customers cut from days to hours

### Business Matters

- Set foundation for rapid business growth and larger clients
- Achieved cost savings with streamlined maintenance, time savings, small IT staff
- Provided stress-free, pay-per-use environment for customers
- Required 4 kilowatts versus 200 kilowatts to cool data centers



In 2002, IT Gården built its first data center and pioneered the concept of providing pay-per-use, Information Technology-as-a-Service (ITaaS) IT to customers. IT Gården has since grown to eight “green” data centers in two cities and continues to expand. HPE solutions provide the foundation for simplified connectivity, streamlined administration, and exceptional performance.

IT Gården started out as an HPE reseller equipping small to medium businesses with on-site servers, networking, and storage from HPE. In 2002, IT Gården transformed its business model to become an outsourced Information Technology as a Service (ITaaS) provider with a clear focus: enable customers to focus on their core competencies, worry less about technology, and pay only for the IT resources they use each month. The company was among the first ever to devise and enact the idea of providing IT as a service.

IT Gården built its first data center using HPE solutions, from edge to core, and a variety of servers. Today, IT Gården relies on a full HPE Converged Infrastructure that includes servers, storage, and networking. HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen8 and HPE ProLiant DL380p Gen8 servers are central to the company’s operations. IT Gården also uses a wide variety of models of HPE StoreVirtual

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— Magnus Nilsson, Chief Technology Officer, IT Gården

solutions with hypervisor integration to maintain fully redundant site failover and full data protection. “We started early with a unique IaaS model that was unheard of at the time but is now quite common,” says IT Gården CTO Magnus Nilsson. “After years of learning firsthand about the reliability and quality of HPE technologies as a reseller, the choice to build our IaaS model and data centers on HPE networking solutions, servers, and management software was never in dispute.”

### **From garden to farm**

IT Gården has grown rapidly, and customers can choose from a wide variety of options. The company now has eight data centers and specializes in full IT outsourcing, software hosting, virtualization through VMware, Microsoft® solutions of all types, including storage, networks, and backup. The ongoing challenge is how best to support rapid growth and a wide variety of customer requirements, keeping in mind that some have in-house IT departments while others have no IT staff whatsoever. IT Gården is also acquiring larger customers with more complex demands. The company needed to accommodate their needs, manage a larger network, and support business expansion.

“We work closely with our customers and architects to build future-proof platform solutions that are easy to use and maintain,” says Magnus. “To support fast growth, we continuously upgrade our core infrastructure. As part of that effort, we employ the latest HPE solutions as a way to gain more speed and performance throughout our network while making it simpler and easier to manage. A huge business and IT driver for us is to minimize administration and maintain a lean maintenance staff.”

### **Advanced capabilities**

During the latest core network upgrade, conducted because some of the HPE networking equipment was aging, the company considered five different vendors and elected to stay with HPE. A key goal was finding a core architecture that could connect eight data centers in two cities and manage them seamlessly—without a lot of added data center space. HPE filled the bill.

“HPE’s FlexFabric architecture was able to solve some of the technical issues in converging eight data centers that other vendors could not within the same price range,” says Magnus. “HPE also offered a good price, an exceptional modular network architecture, and also the added benefit

of expert HPE Technology Services for installation, configuration services, easy-to-use maintenance software, and ongoing support. One of the main things we like about HPE is that everything is connected and orchestrated—we don't have to go different places for hardware, software, and support."

IT Gården built a network with a core access layer, a ring environment between data centers, and a distribution layer connecting to customers' on-premise infrastructures. The IT Gården environment is equipped primarily with the HPE FlexFabric 5820, 5800, 5900 switches.

HPE Technology Services provided consulting expertise for configuration of the network, working hand-in-hand with IT Gården's staff. HPE Education Services, part of HPE Technology Services, provided quick knowledge transfer on how to operate and maintain the network.

### **Simple, fast administration and maintenance**

HPE Intelligent Management Center (IMC) provides single pane-of-glass management for HPE and multivendor networks at customer sites. IMC streamlines configuration changes and makes administering the network easier. Due to a wide variety of client skill sets, IT Gården also offers self-service options for customers. This includes supplying remote management tools such as IMC for non-technical staff to control their own IT systems and customize them to fit specific business needs.

The company uses HPE Intelligent Resilient Framework (IRF) to virtualize multiple switches into one, creating a single solution for physical and virtual environments and reducing aggregation devices. IRF provides simplicity and resiliency with fewer hops and lower latency to boost network performance for customers.

The network allows IT Gården to exchange traffic and power between data centers for additional flexibility and reduced latency. This makes on-boarding new customers and conducting maintenance faster and simpler than ever. Much of the work can occur remotely, without IT Gården staff having to travel to the customer site.

"In the past, it could take days to provision a new customer—now it takes a few hours due to standardized processes and HPE's modular, flexible network architecture," says Magnus. "All of these processes can occur during regular daytime work hours, without late nights or expensive overtime."

The HPE FlexFabric architecture also helps IT Gården scale easily in terms of functionality, connectivity, and capacity. The company can upgrade one part of the environment without downtime or failovers. IT Gården is using its virtual environment to cloak between data centers. As a result, the IT team can drop a whole data center without any interruption for customers. "In the past, we would have to call the customer two to three times per year and let them know they had to plan for a period of downtime. Now, maintenance and administration is seamless and invisible to our customers," Magnus explains.

## Customer at a glance

### Hardware

- HPE FlexFabric 5820 Switch Series
- HPE FlexFabric 5800 Switch Series
- HPE FlexFabric 5900 Switch Series
- HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen8
- HPE ProLiant DL380p Gen8 servers
- HPE StoreVirtual

### Software

- HPE Intelligent Management Center
- HPE Intelligent Resilient Framework

### HPE Services

- HPE Technology Services
- HPE Education Services

## Green IT

IT Gården strives for simplicity and environmental efficiency in every aspect of its operations. Its main three locations use groundwater for cooling, saving on electricity costs. Cool ground water is pumped in through a heat exchanger to cool the equipment and is then pumped back down into the ground. Although simple, the technique is highly effective. A data center of similar size would typically use 200 kilowatts for cooling, while one of IT Gården's only uses 4 kilowatts—a major power savings and differentiating factor customers appreciate.

## Rapid expansion

With green IT in mind, IT Gården is rapidly expanding, while minimizing its environmental footprint. Since 2002, it has grown from one data center to eight and is serving ever-larger clients. Some large companies that have invested in their own infrastructures are even moving their data centers into one of IT Gården's. By putting their data center under the IT Gården umbrella, companies gain more speed and higher levels of simplicity. With HPE's FlexFabric architecture and robust administration tools, IT Gården has been able to grow while maintaining a small IT staff.

Customers large and small appreciate the ability to pay for only the IT they need and use, on a monthly basis.

"Some of the attributes we appreciate most about HPE solutions are their simplicity, flexibility, and time savings they afford," says Magnus. "We are well prepared to grow quite large, take on more customers, and support a wide variety of customers' business needs, without adding tremendous costs or staff. Our main focus is to provide a stress-free IT environment for our customers. That's where HPE solutions and Technology Services are crucial."

## About IT Gården

For a fixed monthly fee per user, IT Gården offers one of the most advanced IT infrastructures that at any time can be increased or decreased according to customer needs. IT Gården focuses on reducing IT costs by sharing equipment and services among multiple data centers. The company started out as an HPE reseller and, since 2002, has built 8 data centers in two cities in Sweden.

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