

Challenge

- Adopt a common shared storage platform so that processes could be streamlined and the cost benefits could be shared across the group. Shared storage platform also forms key foundation for multi-site DR strategy.

Solution

- HP EVA 8100 in a high performance configuration
- HP redundant 4GB SAN fabric with PowerPack enhancements
- HP BladeSystem c-Class chassis with hp Virtual Connect Technology
- HP Data Protector Backup Software
- HP MSL Tape Library
- HP CarePack for 24/7/4 Support for 3 years
- Richardson Eyres Consulting Services & Skills transfer to deploy and optimise

Results

- Single common platform on a shared services model
- High-performance storage for key production databases
- Effective utilisation of existing resources
- Improved availability and disaster recovery
- Scalable platform for future expansion

// Richardson Eyres provides solutions for data centre consolidation. It works with its customers to streamline IT infrastructures, freeing up time, resources and ultimately saving its customers' money.

It has partnerships with HP and VMware, and is one of a small number of HP Professional Services Partners (PSP) in the UK. It also provides solutions for companies globally, from their offices in the UK and the US.

Richardson Eyres develops long-term and mutually beneficial relationships working with its customers to ensure that it provides bespoke solutions to help their business run efficiently, effectively and above all, profitably.

With over 20 years experience as a data centre consultant, Richardson Eyres has extensive technical knowledge and the know-how to apply this knowledge to help organisations run their IT infrastructures more efficiently. Established in 1986, the company is privately owned and its headquarters is in Chesham, Buckinghamshire.
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//Aurora Fashions prepares storage to streamline IT

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Aurora Fashions (formerly Mosaic Fashions) is the parent company of design-led fashion brands: Oasis, Warehouse, Coast, Karen Millen and Anoushka G. The brands in Aurora Fashions portfolio are sold through over 2,000 stores in 37 countries with a total turnover of £1billion.

Development has been through brand acquisition, brand extensions and organic growth, resulting in an expanding network of UK and international concessions and franchises.

The strategy of the company is to develop strongly differentiated and independent brands leveraging shared skills and infrastructure for IT services, with the individual brands being managed as distinct businesses.

A common platform

A fast growing and acquisitive organisation, two of Aurora Fashions most recent purchases were Rubicon Retail and the Shoe Studio Group. These acquisitions brought with them their associated IT infrastructures and in order to streamline its IT systems, Aurora decided to adopt a common platform so that processes could be streamlined and the cost benefits could be shared across the group.

Ahead of being able to merge all of Rubicon's supply chain systems into the single common platform, Aurora's first task was to build an additional data centre and roll out storage area networking (SAN) across the whole site.

"In order to be able to fully integrate our latest acquisitions and consolidate our IT systems, our first job was to centralise our storage with a scalable solution which could grow as our organisation expands," explained Richard Haverly, infrastructure technical lead, Aurora Fashions.

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Aurora Fashions discussed their needs with three companies, but was particularly impressed with an HP SAN and the capabilities offered by HP Blade servers. Data centre consolidations specialists, and HP Professional Services Partner, Richardson Eyres were chosen to implement the solution.

"Richardson Eyres was hugely responsive to our request. It fully understood our needs to streamline our IT systems based on a storage area network that would be scalable for our future growth plans," said Neil Hooper, infrastructure manager, Aurora Fashions.

He continued: "The technicians ticked every box, in terms of our timelines and budget and we felt we received a very personal service with the support of a large company."

Ease of management

Aurora Fashions purchased an HP EVA8100 storage disk array, HP 4GB SAN Fabric and HP c-Class Blades. In addition, it also purchased an HP Tape Library and implemented HP Data Protector software to achieve high performance backup and recovery of its data. Richardson Eyres rolled out the SAN and HP Blade servers in accordance with Aurora's timelines and within budget. The HP SAN delivers the scalability, performance and broad interoperability Aurora requires for its critical data and applications.

Blades presented the ideal solution as they were able to offer an IT infrastructure that is flexible and allows companies to change their computing environment to meet changes in the market or company needs.

"This has been a technical step change for Aurora," said Haverly. "We are now in a position to grow our organisation and can integrate acquisitions more easily as the solution is so scalable."

He continues: "The HP/Richardson Eyres solution has allowed us to centralise our storage and this means that we have saved space and also reduced our power consumption. The new solution also allows us to strengthen our disaster recovery."

Aurora Fashions plans to adopt virtualisation technology to help with capacity planning in the future. Virtualisation technologies pool IT resources so that applications and services can share and more efficiently utilise them. The implementation of modular Blade servers supports this, limiting the number of servers the company needs to acquire in the future as new applications are used and the business grows. Blades also support natural business growth such as acquisitions and allow for additional computing and storage.

With a storage network infrastructure able to accommodate any plans for future growth, Aurora Fashions has now been able to replace all of Rubicon's supply chain systems with a single common platform based on a shared services model covering warehouse and merchandise planning and business intelligence.

"Now we've adopted this technology, we will add onto this platform and we fully intend to do this in the future with Richardson Eyres as our partner," concludes Hooper.

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