

Giant Televised Retailer Sold on Speedware Services

"We were told this project would be impossible to complete within the allotted time. Speedware proved that with the right experience, planning and knowledge, even the impossible can become a reality."

Customer Profile

The "Customer," a leader in televised retailing, is known as a virtual shopping mall that never closes. The company provides themed telecasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to an audience of over 100 million viewers worldwide. The customer has operation centers in the US, Germany, the UK and Asia.

Time was Running Out

As a long time Hewlett-Packard customer, this retailer already had the largest HP e3000 machines on site, yet operations in Germany and the UK were rapidly approaching maximum capacity. That, together with the announcement that HP would soon no longer support the HP e3000, made it imperative that a migration solution be found and implemented quickly. Following a detailed analysis of their systems, the customer solicited a number of proposals. Their internal IT department claimed that, due to the complexity of the IT environment, a migration solution would be impossible to implement within the specified time frame.

Listening to the Customer

In their search for a migration solution, the customer focused on three issues: timing, performance and risk.

Of utmost importance to the customer was that the migration be completed within a 12-month window. The retailer needed a migration solution that would be in place in time to handle the increase in volume that would accompany the next year's holiday shopping season.

Performance was another high priority as the retailer needed to ensure that migrated applications would run as fast as the originals and that response times would not suffer. As a global organization that operated on a 24/7 basis, the customer

had many real-time interfaces. The speed at which the applications ran was instrumental in ensuring that television schedules were updated regularly, customer orders processed rapidly, inventory supply management updated instantly, and delivery packing slips produced within the guaranteed time - all of which factors contributed to the customer satisfaction that made this company a leading electronic retailer. With a requirement that functionality remain the same, transparency was also a part of the performance criteria. At the end of the migration process, the customer wanted to be sure there would be no impact to the end user.

Finally, the retailer was interested in a low-risk solution. With an extraordinary amount of information being processed daily, the company wanted a migration approach that would ensure business continuity.

The Complexity Challenge

The complexity of this organization's IT system would prove to be the biggest challenge. The retailer's high-tech data center stores vast amounts of information, at times as much as 19 terabytes of data. As an example, it would take 50,000 trees to produce enough paper to print one terabyte of data. The company had a mix of over forty different technologies including COBOL, Suprtool and a custom screen driver. The amount of code to be migrated was enormous.

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Adding to the issue of complexity was the fact that three separate business operations - the US, Germany and the UK- were sharing the applications. There were regional differences associated with each of these business entities and the proposed migration solution would have to address these differences.

Speedware's Migration Solution

Speedware was awarded the contract not only because of their competitive pricing but also due to an innovative migration approach that zeroed in on the customer's concerns. The proposed migration solution allowed the retailer to keep their databases and structures without the need to rewrite, helping to ensure that the project was completed on time. In addition, the solution allowed the company to keep certain tools that were vital to their operations.

Speedware's migration solution involved a phased approach, breaking the project down into ten manageable segments. This approach allowed for thorough testing of one phase before the next phase was introduced. As the customer's focus was on a low-risk solution, this phased approach was instrumental in reducing risk.

Highlights of a Successful Migration

At the end of the migration, both the customer and Speedware knew they had accomplished what was once considered impossible.

Speedware completed the migration project on time, ensuring that the retailer would be able to handle the anticipated spike in holiday transactions without incident. Armed with new, more robust HP Integrity servers running HP-UX, reliability was maintained and the level of performance was better than expected.

In excess of 2 million lines of code were successfully migrated. Despite the complexity of the project, the transition from the HP e3000 to the HP Integrity was smooth and business continuity was maintained. Throughout the project, functionality for the end users remained the same, with no discernable impact.

The added bonus for the company was the superior project management provided by Speedware's resource team. The collaboration between the Speedware and customer teams was exceptional, resulting in the Speedware team becoming an integral part of the retailer's organization. The synergy between the two companies led to a continued partnership and ongoing business opportunities. Speedware continues to supply professional services and support for the retailer's IT projects and the retailer has become a reference site for potential Speedware customers.

About Speedware

Speedware has been dedicated to helping companies modernize their business applications for over 15 years and enjoys a 100% project success rate. The company specializes in developing end-to-end modernization solutions that allow industry and government leaders to increase their business agility and reduce their operational costs. Speedware has been a leading provider of enterprise software solutions since 1976, offering a complete suite of legacy modernization, migration and application portfolio management solutions, business intelligence tools and application development solutions.

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