Promotional Apparel Company Powers Up

Ash City boosts performance
with IBM Power solution
from Sentia

Customers rely on Ash City's extensive product inventory, online and print marketing tools, customization services and speedy delivery to meet their corporate gifting and promotional needs. Ash City products are sold to marketing and advertising companies across North America and Europe who, in turn, service the corporate casual, resort retail and resort green grass markets.

The promotional apparel industry is a highly competitive one, so it's imperative to continuously re-evaluate and improve operations – not only customer facing services, but behind-the scenes business units as well.

One such business improvement initiative was Ash City's implementation of a new ERP system. Ted Dayno, IT Manager at Ash City Worldwide explains, "We required additional computing resources to accommodate a migration and testing environment for our ERP system without negatively impacting our production environment and employee productivity."

Ash City intended to update their IBM System i to the latest IBM POWER 7® Systems technology and they needed an experienced implementation partner to help execute their plans.

"Since we had dealt with Sentia before, they had already demonstrated their ability to deliver a high quality solution on short notice. Their technical consultants are very knowledgeable and well trained," says Mr. Dayno.

Gary Millward, Account Executive at Sentia, an IBM Premier Business Partner, describes why Sentia was a good fit for Ash City, "With our expertise in performance management, capacity planning, and systems design for IBM Power Systems™, we knew we could help Ash City move forward quickly with full confidence in the new system. Right-sizing the solution was key."

The results are separate Production, High Availability and Development environments that completely eliminate risk to Ash City's core business.

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Ted Dayno,
IT Manager
Ash City Worldwide

Fashion-forward designs, performance-driven fabrics, and rigorous manufacturing quality standards have made Ash City Worldwide a global leader in the customized promotional apparel industry.

Promotional firm seeks right-sized solution

Ash City Worldwide started as a small distribution centre in Toronto in the late 1970's, and has since grown to an organization that employs 500 people globally, including Canada, the United States, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

Practically every function of the company touches every customer order, from production department through to customer service and distribution - they all work together to ensure the final goal of total customer satisfaction is achieved.

To maintain customer service standards and to keep pace with the company's growth, Mr. Dayno was tasked with updating their ERP system - and finding a way to do so without causing disruption to their current production environment.

"Our existing IBM System i production machine wasn't partitioned, so we didn't want to load our new ERP software within the same server and risk affecting our production environment," explains Mr. Dayno, "We needed a new server."

Knowledge is power

With requirements from their ERP business partner in hand, Ash City considered two technology vendors with whom they had previously worked – one of them being Sentia.

"Sentia has a lot of expertise in performance management, capacity planning, and high availability designs on IBM Power Systems™ running IBM i," states Mr. Millward, "We recommended taking empirical performance data from their production environment and modeling it to the new system. Ash City agreed that our solution was the best fit for their business."

Coordinated implementation

Due to the involvement of software specialists, the implementation timeframe was sensitive. "With consultants lined up to install the ERP system, we had a drop dead date. Sentia gave us their word on a delivery date and that was a huge service to us," says Mr. Dayno. "Sentia completed the installation in less than three weeks, enabling our ERP consultants to load the software application."

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Gary Millward, Account Executive at Sentia

Performance and reliability

The IBM Power® 720 Express, with IBM i provides Ash City with a foundation to improve productivity, keep data secure, and meet their growing needs.

"We're experiencing high availability with the IBM Power 720 – it's always up, 24/7. The performance it offers is perfect for the needs of our business. It's more powerful than our previous system," comments Mr. Dayno.

Risk-free resources

"IBM PowerVM software technology combined with IBM POWER 7 hardware gives Ash City the ability to separate resources dedicated to their HA environment from resources assigned to development and testing in their ERP application modernization and migration project. This eliminates any risk to their production environment," says Mr. Millward.

IBM a good fit

Ash City has used IBM technology for over a decade, and for good reason. "IBM technology has proven to be very reliable and well supported. We know we can count on their technical knowledge and quick response time," states Mr. Dayno.

Future prospects

Desktop and server virtualization continue to be priority initiatives while Ash City transitions their ERP system to the IBM POWER 7 System. And cloud computing technology could be on the horizon.

IBM POWER 7 Solutions from Sentia, an IBM Premier Business Partner

Featuring:

- IBM i 6.1
- IBM PowerVM
- IBM Power® 720 Express
- IBM Hardware Management Console
- Vision iTera Availability
- Sentia Architecture and Implementation Services

SENTIA
People + Technology
Building Value

For immediate assistance, contact us at
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