Diamond Comics Boosts Performance and Cuts Costs With IBM POWER9 and Spectrum Protect.

Founded in 1982, Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc. resides at the nexus of comics and pop-culture with a multi-channel platform of publishing, marketing, and fulfillment services, coupled with an unparalleled global distribution network for its retailers, publishers, and vendors. What started as one man's hobby, with only a single warehouse and 17 retail customers, has evolved into the Diamond of today: the world's largest distributor of English-language comics, graphic novels, and pop-culture-related merchandise. The Diamond Comics mission is to provide wholesale customers with the best in products, price, and personalized service. Above all, Diamond aims to treat its customers with one resounding quality: respect.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Bill Larduskey, Director of IT at Diamond Comics, is responsible for the entire IT infrastructure at the home office and at 20 locations on two continents, ensuring the company deploys the best possible equipment for networking, telephony, and security. Bill describes his job as "I have to have the answers before you have the questions."

The company's AIX system was reaching end-of-life, and Diamond Comics needed to evolve. Diamond Comics can't sell or ship products without technology, so the company can't afford any downtime. Comic fans want their publications hot off the presses. As Diamond's systems became older, they became less affordable and flexible. Diamond Comics needs to stay up on technology and move with it.

Diamond Comics turned to Mainline to update its systems because the two companies have a 20-year relationship built on trust. Mainline was familiar with the business, so they could scope out the new solutions. Mainline developed a solution that included an IBM POWER9 refresh, IBM FlashSystem FS5200 for more capacity and performance, and Spectrum Protect for data protection and disaster recovery to ensure availability.

THE SOLUTION

IBM POWER9 refresh

IBM POWER9 is 4x more efficient than POWER7, delivering more processing and compute power while consuming less energy. POWER7 is running out of support, so the warranty on POWER9 delivers savings over the older equipment. This industry-leading server gave the company a high-performance, cost-effective solution that increased scalability. Diamond Comics eliminated maintenance costs and benefitted from financing, as well as a robust trade-in for storage.

IBM FlashSystem 5200

A member of the IBM FlashSystem family, the FS5200 is an evolutionary, high-performance storage solution. The FS5200 provides an all-flash setup for a cloud-ready world. The FS5200 is amazingly compact with its 1U form factor, has the capacity for growth (1.7PB effective capacity within a single 1U system), and is cost-effective.

Customer:	Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.
Headquarters:	Cockeysville, Maryland
Industry:	Distribution

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- AIX system reaching end-of-life
- Need for an updated platform flexible enough to handle anything
- Need for higher performance and availability
- Meeting storage system capacity for growth

THE SOLUTION

- IBM POWER9
- IBM FlashSystem 5200
- IBM Spectrum Protect

THE RESULT

- Capacity for growth
- Better performance
- Higher reliability and availability
- Greater flexibility for the cloud
- Modernization
- Accessibility of data across the business
- Tapeless, managed backup and replication to two sites
- FS5200 pays for itself in 16 months

IBM Spectrum Protect

IBM Spectrum Protect has been Diamond's backup solution for many years. The solution stays modern and up-to-date. Diamond relies on Spectrum Protect for backup worldwide and benefits from Mainline's professional services for management. Diamond can back up everything in SAN and replicate to two locations in the US and the UK. While Diamond has looked at new options on the market, the company continues to invest in the Spectrum Protect managed solution because it provides the critical data backup needed while simplifying backup management. Restores are fast, and redundancy provides reliable protection.

THE RESULT

"In comics distribution, everything is built on the need for speed: the need to be accurate and the need to be fast," says Bill Larduskey, the Director of IT. Larduskey says that FS5200 "Has been a dream. It's amazingly quick. It's compact. It's almost amazingly small, and we haven't even begun to fully populate it yet."

"With IBM Spectrum Protect and managed services to help with that, live data is captured and archived, restores are stunningly quick, done literally in a matter of minutes. It's just click, click, it's done, boom. Redundancy gives real protection. You can sleep at night." said Larduskey.

"Mainline does an amazing job. They've got great people in multiple locations with expertise in all the different areas. They're always there and available. We can get our questions answered and, more importantly, move toward solutions." Larduskey stated. "After 20 years with them, we wouldn't be with them that long if they weren't good at price, performance, and the ability to get things done."

Larduskey went on to say, "We have an immense level of trust in Mainline. I don't like salesmen who lather it up. Let's get the hard numbers and performance metrics. Steve McDonald [Mainline Account Executive] is always upfront and honest. I've got to make hard decisions and I need honesty and reality, not fluff."

For more information, call your Mainline account representative or call Mainline directly at 866.490.MAIN(6246).