At a Glance

Organisation: syncreon

Industry: Integrated logistics and supply chain solutions

Customer Profile

syncreon is a specialist provider of integrated logistics services and supply chain solutions to global industries. The company was formed in 2007 when Walsh Western International and TDS logistics Inc., joined forces to establish a new company. syncreon is active in 25 countries and employs approx. 12,000 staff.

Business Challenge

- To design and architect a mission-critical server, storage and back-up refresh for syncreon, which will provide extra computing and storage capacity as well as seamless disaster recovery.

Solution

Design an overarching server, storage and back-up architecture to incorporate the following:

- 2 x HP StoreServ Storage arrays with 38TB capacity each, providing synchronous replication and failover from EMEA HQ to a third-party data centre via high-speed fibre links. An additional 20TB of capacity was deployed to cope with data growth.
- HP StoreOnce and HP Data Protector centralised back-up to disk, and back-up to tape solution with 12TB capacity.
- HP Integrity Blades for existing chassis.
- Integration of VMware cluster to existing blade infrastructure.

Benefits

- A safe, secure and reliable network infrastructure to support syncreon's growing business.
- Full disaster recovery with seamless failover to offsite data centre in the event of outage.
- More focus on strategic IT projects thanks to responsive technical support.

Strong business growth drives server, storage and back-up refresh for global logistics specialist, syncreon

Leading global logistics specialist, syncreon has upgraded its server, storage and back-up infrastructure to support the organisation's strong business growth. The infrastructure refresh, designed and architected by MJ Flood Technology and based on HP technology, provides high-speed, high-availability server and storage performance together with seamless back-up and disaster recovery.

"We chose MJ Flood Technology as we were able to leverage the team's technical design skills," explained Alan Rossiter, IT director for global enterprise infrastructure with syncreon. "Being able to design an infrastructure, spec it out correctly and get it right first time, enabled us to deploy the kit and deliver exactly what we needed."

Designing the Storage Infrastructure

Strong business growth in Russia, Brazil and EMEA was stretching the company's IT infrastructure to its limits. Aging hardware together with burgeoning data growth was putting pressure on existing storage arrays, in particular.

"We designed a scalable and flexible storage infrastructure to support syncreon's growth," according to Pat O'Neill, lead Pre-Sales Storage specialist with MJ Flood Technology. "We've gone steps beyond industry standards to architect a solution which intelligently optimises use of stored data, thanks to HP storage technology," he said.

O'Neill specified two HP StoreServ Tier-1 storage arrays of 38TB each, one at EMEA HQ in Dublin and the other at a third-party data centre, with synchronous replication and failover across high-speed fibre links for full resiliency.

"StoreServ provides near-instant storage provisioning with reduced capacity requirements of at least 50%, guaranteed," he said. "It really stands out from other solutions in its class and provides syncreon with the flexibility, responsiveness and powerful performance it needs."

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Alan Rossiter, IT director for global enterprise infrastructure, syncreon

syncreon decided to re-commit to HP as their partner of choice for this latest upgrade.

"Sticking with one vendor is a massive plus in terms of being able to get support," said Rossiter. "With a mixed vendor environment, difficulties can arise in isolating and troubleshooting issues. But HP support is really strong and that's one of the reasons why we chose them. Confidence in support allows us to focus our IT resources on more strategic business projects," he said.

The project also involved the consolidation of IT infrastructure from syncreon's Logit operations in Hamburg back to HQ in Dublin. An additional 20TB was added to each of the existing 38TB chassis and the server infrastructure was consolidated back into the existing HP infrastructure using a VMware cluster.

"It's a neat solution," said O'Neill as it integrates a virtualised cluster into the existing blade infrastructure. So we have a classic hybrid environment in one chassis, which leverages existing technology investment," he said.

High availability and seamless back-up

As with any mission-critical IT infrastructure, back-up is a key component. The MJ Flood Technology design team recommended HP StoreOnce disk to disk back-up solution with HP Data Protector for disk to tape – providing a total of 12TB of capacity.

StoreOnce easily integrates with existing StoreServ and virtualised infrastructures and provides full data deduplication functionality to minimise storage requirements. It uses 'virtual copy' features to take regular data snapshots from the StoreServ arrays and using HP Data Protector sends them to tape, all across a fibre backbone.

"HP Data Protector operationalises the in-built intelligence from the StoreServ solution," said O'Neill. "It delivers real versatility in that it automatically optimises usage of the storage array, allowing syncreon the ability to move data and workloads between arrays without impacting applications, users or services."

Planning for the future

"We've probably got to the stage that we will need to increase further capacity very soon," said Rossiter. The project has been seamless for us. It's gone in and delivers exactly what we need."

For further information on MJ Flood Technology solutions for logistics and supply chain organisations, please contact Mark Donnellan at mdonnellan@mjf.ie

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