Agricultural Supplier Keeps High Performance, Cuts Costs by 40 Percent with Switch from Oracle to Microsoft

Summary

DeLaval provides dairy farmers with a range of equipment and solutions, such as milking systems, herd management services, and cleaning products. The company uses a Siebel customer relationship management (CRM) system for its mission-critical sales activities. When DeLaval sought to replace aging hardware for the Siebel system, it determined that upgrading the system's Oracle database software would be prohibitively expensive. The company decided to replace Oracle with Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Enterprise data management software and the Windows Server 2008 R2 operating system, running the software on an HP ProLiant DL380 server computer and a NetApp disk storage system. The Microsoft Application Platform products provide enterprise-level performance for the company's mission-critical system at a fraction of the cost of the equivalent Oracle solution.

Mission-Critical Systems

In business for more than 125 years, DeLaval today operates globally in more than 100 markets, providing farmers with equipment and solutions through dealerships operated by DeLaval and its partners. The company maintains 37 regional sales organizations. To support these sales personnel in the office and in the field, DeLaval runs a Siebel CRM system to manage data, including customer contact details, purchase histories, and order information. It averages between 500 and 600 transactions daily. "Siebel is the main application for our global sales force," says Frank Gretzinger, Manager of Information Services Technical Infrastructure within DeLaval. "If either the Siebel application or the systems that are connected to it go down, our internal users—and thus our business—would be badly affected."

Solution Overview

Toward the end of 2009, Gretzinger's department considered replacing the Siebel system's aging server hardware. Dual-core processors were no longer an option on the market, so a quad-core processor configuration was the logical choice. To avoid single points of failure, the company determined that both processor sockets should be used to enhance system responsiveness. That course, however, had an impact on licensing. The IT department wanted to achieve software performance that was equal to or better than what it had with Oracle while keeping costs reasonable. According to Gretzinger, this was not possible using the Oracle database system to support the Siebel software, which is an Oracle Corporation product. "If we moved to a quad-core processor configuration, our Oracle licenses would need to double, so we would incur large up-front costs and larger yearly maintenance costs," he says. "We felt it was simply too expensive."

The company decided to move to a Microsoft platform, replacing its Linux operating system with Windows Server 2008 R2 and its Oracle database with Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Enterprise. This provided a choice of installing an HP ProLiant DL380 server with two, four, or six cores at no additional licensing costs. Gretzinger says the Microsoft Application Platform products improved the company's price/performance goals by providing the same level of speed and high availability in a cluster configuration as Linux and Oracle, but at a lower cost. DeLaval worked with Mission Critical Computing, a California-based Microsoft Certified Partner, to migrate the Siebel system from Oracle to SQL Server. The work included a health check for the server setup and fine-tuning the Siebel application queries. The SQL Server Profiler tool was used to optimize database performance on the new hardware. DeLaval based its new Siebel system on these products:

- Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Enterprise
- Windows Server 2008 R2
- Siebel CRM 8.0
- HP ProLiant DL380 server hardware

"The Microsoft products provide a supporting infrastructure for our Siebel CRM system that equals or exceeds the performance we experienced using Oracle and Linux, but at a significantly lower cost."

Frank Gretzinger, Manager of Information Services Technical Infrastructure, DeLaval

Top Reasons Why DeLaval Chose Microsoft

DeLaval runs its mission-critical CRM system on the Microsoft Application Platform and HP ProLiant server hardware in order to:

1. Provide high levels of performance and data availability for users accessing the system.
2. Achieve a much lower cost, both in capital expenditures and ongoing maintenance, than a comparable system from Oracle.
3. Benefit from comprehensive tools for IT administration at no additional cost.

Business Pain Points Addressed

By migrating its Siebel CRM system from an Oracle and Linux platform to SQL Server and Windows Server, and moving to a quad-core ProLiant DL380 server, DeLaval was able to:

- Maintain the reliability and availability of a mission-critical sales and order system that is used around the clock by representatives at locations across the globe.
- Improve overall Siebel system responsiveness for users.
- Reduce annual costs for database licenses by about 40 percent.
- Use IT management tools that are included at no additional cost in the Windows Server and SQL Server licenses, instead of paying the additional fees required by Oracle for tools that provide identical functionality.
- Reduce IT complexity with Microsoft management tools that can be used across the range of Microsoft products, including Windows Server and SQL Server.

Technical Pain Points Addressed

DeLaval determined that the new system based on the HP servers and Microsoft Application Platform:

- Improved the average response time for a typical Siebel query by about 75 percent. The IT department has recorded an average response time of 1,234.6 milliseconds on the SQL Server database, compared with an average time of 4,929 milliseconds on the Oracle database.
- Increased data availability to 99.99 percent using SQL Server, up from 99.97 percent using Oracle.
- Helped overall tuning and management of the database component with tools that include SQL Server Profiler, the SQL Server Database Engine, and the Windows Server system monitor tool PerfMon.

Conclusion

With an IT solution based on the Microsoft Application Platform, DeLaval successfully upgraded the servers supporting its Siebel CRM system to a faster HP ProLiant server while maintaining a high level of overall system performance for users and reducing costs.

About DeLaval

DeLaval has more than 125 years of experience in the dairy business. The company develops, manufactures, and markets equipment and complete systems for dairy farmers worldwide. It supplies solutions for milking, animal husbandry, herd management, animal traffic control, feeding, cooling, manure handling, ventilation, and energy recovery. The company is based in Tumba, Sweden, and employs more than 4,000 people globally.

For More Information

DeLaval Services GmbH
Glinde, Germany
Phone: (49) (0) 40 30 33 44 0
www.delaval.com

Mission Critical Computing
Palo Alto, California
United States
Phone: (650) 924-2115
www.missioncriticalcomputing.com

Microsoft Corporation
Redmond, Washington
United States
Phone: (800) 426-9400
www.microsoft.com