

Nelson

Nelson Money Managers Increases Compliancy, Improves Business Processing and Reduces IT Costs

case study

Solution Overview

Nelson Money Managers wanted to move away from end of life Sun equipment to a new infrastructure that would help it comply with finance industry regulatory requirements; improve business-processing times and reduce hardware maintenance costs. The company needed advice on what options were available and what would work best for its requirements. It also needed to keep within a strict budget.

Nelson Money Managers

Nelson Money Managers has been providing financial advice and management for the past thirty years. The company works with over 21,000 clients including Shell, Vauxhall, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Orange. On behalf of these clients the company manages approximately £1.2 billion.

The majority of its clients are large employers to which Nelson provides assistance in enabling them to offer employees advice on tax, investment and retirement planning. In addition, Nelson Money Managers also provides services directly to individuals.

Nelson is part of the Close Brothers Group, which is the largest independent quoted Merchant Bank in the UK and a top 200 company in the FTSE All Share Index.

The Challenge

Nelson made the decision to move its business processing from an eight year old platform to a modern infrastructure as it needed to comply with finance industry regulatory requirements, improve business processing times and reduce hardware maintenance costs.

Esteem carried out a full analysis of the existing infrastructure and listened to Nelson's requirements, objectives and budget constraints. Following this, Esteem advised on what would work best for their requirements and began designing a new infrastructure that would move Nelson away from existing end of life servers and disk arrays.

Esteem Systems

Esteem Systems is a leading supplier of IT services and holds a large number of accreditations with some of the most renowned technology manufacturers in the world.

As a Premier Accredited Sun System Provider, Esteem has the ability to deliver infrastructure solutions and full lifecycle services including consultancy, design, implementation and post implementation support, maintenance and managed services.

With more than twenty years of experience, Esteem works in both the private and public sector, installing, monitoring and managing some of the most complex IT infrastructures in the country. Esteem employees are highly trained and share a unique passion for driving real business improvements through the use of advanced IT systems and services.

The Business Solution

Following the consultation period, Esteem designed, architected, piloted and installed a new solution for Nelson Money Managers based on Sun Microsystems Sun Fire servers, Sun StorEdge arrays and Solaris operating system. The solution was recommended because it would address Nelson's issues with regards to poor system performance, batch processing taking too long, hardware maintenance costs spiralling and problems surrounding the support of end of line equipment.



Solution Overview

Hardware

- Sun Fire V880
- Sun Fire V250
- Sun StorEdge 3510 FC array

Software

- Sun Solaris Operating System

Services

- Design
- Architect
- Planning
- Installation
- Knowledge transfer
- 3 year support contract

Key Business Benefits

- Compliance in line with industry requirements
- Improved business processing time
- Rapid return on investment
- Enhanced performance speeds
- More cost effective support
- Minimised risk of downtime
- Hardware maintenance costs reduced
- Improved employee efficiency
- Enhanced customer service

"My advice to anyone looking at reviewing their infrastructure would be to involve a reliable partner such as Esteem, as soon as possible within the project, as they can provide valuable advice on the feasibility before purchase."

The Sun Fire V880 is ideal for companies with departmental environments such as Nelson which has various departments including: Investment Management, Finance and Banking, Investment Administration and Client Care. This is because it excels in supporting an extensive array of applications, including Internet, database, e-commerce and ERP software. The V880 supports two to eight processors and up to 64GB of main memory to enhance performance. It also possesses an advanced set of reliability, availability and serviceability features – all of which are a must in the fast moving world of finance.

The Sun Fire V250 was included in the solution for test purposes and offers reliability and security in a two processor platform. By utilising it alongside the V880, Nelson Money Managers is able to trial new processes, applications and hardware securely before introducing them to the entire network.

Esteem recommended Sun's StorEdge 3510 FC array be included in the end-to-end solution because it provides a compact, affordable and expandable storage option that is simple to deploy and easy to manage. This product will work well for Nelson Money Managers because it is designed to support growing storage requirements and so any future upgrades to entry level SANs are simplified. The array is easy to deploy with flexible configuration and management options, online capacity expansion and remote monitoring.

The solution also uses Sun's operating environment, Solaris, for optimum ease of maintenance and full functionality. This is the most advanced UNIX operating system, enabling users to accommodate surging workloads and consolidate multiple platforms. It can also automatically identify component failures before they happen.

The Results

Now in place, the new solution helps Nelson to remain compliant with industry requirements as dictated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA). These requirements include regulations surrounding customer relations, information supply, file keeping and updating, affordability for clients, explaining risk, limited advice transactions, continued professional development and complaints procedures.

The new infrastructure has also brought many additional benefits to Nelson. A major benefit has been improved business processing times across all departments. The benefits have ranged between 225% and 660% increases in the speed at which batches of information, such as new customer records and updates to existing customer files, can be processed. This information is crucial to Nelson's day-to-day operations and is constantly being updated. Report processing has also been greatly improved and Nelson has seen 100% increases in speed in this area. Combined, these two improvements enable the company to make employees more effective as they can work quicker and enhance customer service as a result.

Other benefits include reduced risk of downtime as a result of inbuilt resilience, giving Nelson business continuity and performance confidence; as well as reduced cost of support as the old, end of line equipment was becoming very expensive to support and maintain. The cost of this, offset against the cost of investing in new technology, brings a positive return on investment.

Alan Sillitoe, Unix System Administrator at Nelson said: "We are delighted with the results of this project and the benefits it has brought. Esteem worked alongside us to advise, implement and provide knowledge transfer and we found them to be extremely professional and effective. We now have a three year support contract in place which gives us peace of mind. It will also enable us to continue building on our relationship with Esteem and benefiting from the company's wide-reaching knowledge.

"The improvements we have seen in terms of FSA compliance, business processing times and report processing have been impressive and we are now able to assist our employees to work more effectively and feel confident that we are delivering the best service possible to our customers.

"My advice to anyone looking at reviewing their infrastructure would be to involve a reliable partner such as Esteem, as soon as possible within the project, as they can provide valuable advice on the feasibility before purchase."

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