

Burlington Coat Factory

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SUCCESS STORY

Large U.S. retailer runs its enterprise on SUSE® LINUX to decrease administrative costs and reduce hardware costs tenfold.

OVERVIEW

Burlington Coat Factory is a national retail chain offering high quality, designer merchandise at up to 60 percent less than other department store prices. The company has 341 stores in 42 states nationwide.

CHALLENGE

Burlington Coat Factory has been running its enterprise on Linux* for several years, replacing the “green screens” in its retail stores with Web-based applications. But the company needed to replace its large-scale servers that were obsolete, complex and difficult to manage. Implementing clustered Intel servers throughout its enterprise would provide better performance while reducing administration time.

Burlington was also dissatisfied with support from its existing Linux distribution provider and began searching for a company committed to its success. The new Linux distribution also needed to host a large number of databases, support an upgrade to Oracle* 10 and accommodate more than 350 storage devices.

SOLUTION

Burlington looked at Microsoft Windows*, as well as other UNIX* alternatives, but wanted an operating system that wasn't tied to a single software or hardware vendor. The company took the recommendation of another software provider to move to SUSE LINUX Enterprise Server.

“SUSE came in like a knight on a white horse,” said Michael Prince, CIO of Burlington Coat Factory Warehouse Corporation. “They were extremely responsive and addressed our 10 biggest issues right off the bat. SUSE LINUX was the only solution that allowed us to move forward with our chosen architecture—Oracle, Linux, IBM* and PolyServe*.”

In less than two weeks, Burlington implemented SUSE LINUX on IBM xSeries* servers to run two major applications. The company took advantage of a PolyServe clustered environment to provide high availability for the system supporting its shopping and gift cards. SUSE LINUX provided better performance for peak transaction times, ensuring that ensuring that Burlington customers can use their shopping and gift cards in any store, at any time.

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—Michael Prince,
CIO,
Burlington Coat Factory
Warehouse Corporation





"SUSE LINUX has performed beyond our expectations," said Prince. "We were really excited when Novell bought SUSE and now view Novell as strong technology partner. They have an extraordinary attitude toward support and are committed to the Linux enterprise."

Burlington is working to replace its obsolete, large-scale servers with lower-cost Intel servers in a clustered environment. Near-term payoffs come from better workload management and superior performance. The company also expects an enormous amount of IT administration savings with the ability to automatically image its machines and remotely install software throughout its environment without any downtime.

"The systems in our retail stores are so stable they can run for six months or more without being rebooted, and we have yet to see a virus attack," said Prince. "Stability is crucial for these systems in order for our associates to provide top-notch customer service."

The company will also recognize a huge cost savings by moving to an Intel* infrastructure for nearly 2,000 Linux servers and 5,000 Wincor Nixdorf* point-of-sale devices in its 341 stores.

"With lots of independent systems, no one server is expected to do everything and we don't have to shut down half the company if a main server goes down," said Prince. "Running on Linux makes it cost effective to put small systems together, and with open standards, we are not tied to any particular hardware vendor. The SUSE LINUX distribution is the highest quality investment we could make."

RESULTS

By running its enterprise on SUSE LINUX, Burlington has reduced its hardware costs tenfold from its previous UNIX environment, while creating a more reliable infrastructure. SUSE LINUX provides greatly improved uptime, particularly during peak transaction times around holidays, as well as the scalability to support multiple Oracle databases and a variety of storage devices.

"Without SUSE LINUX we wouldn't be as far along in deploying a heavy-duty data center," said Prince. "We also would have been more constrained by costs and would have ended up spending more money on a system not nearly as robust. SUSE LINUX gives us a level of reliability that retailers never could have afforded before."

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