**Choithrams**
full of goodness

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Arunachalam Palaniappan
Chief Technology Officer
Choithrams
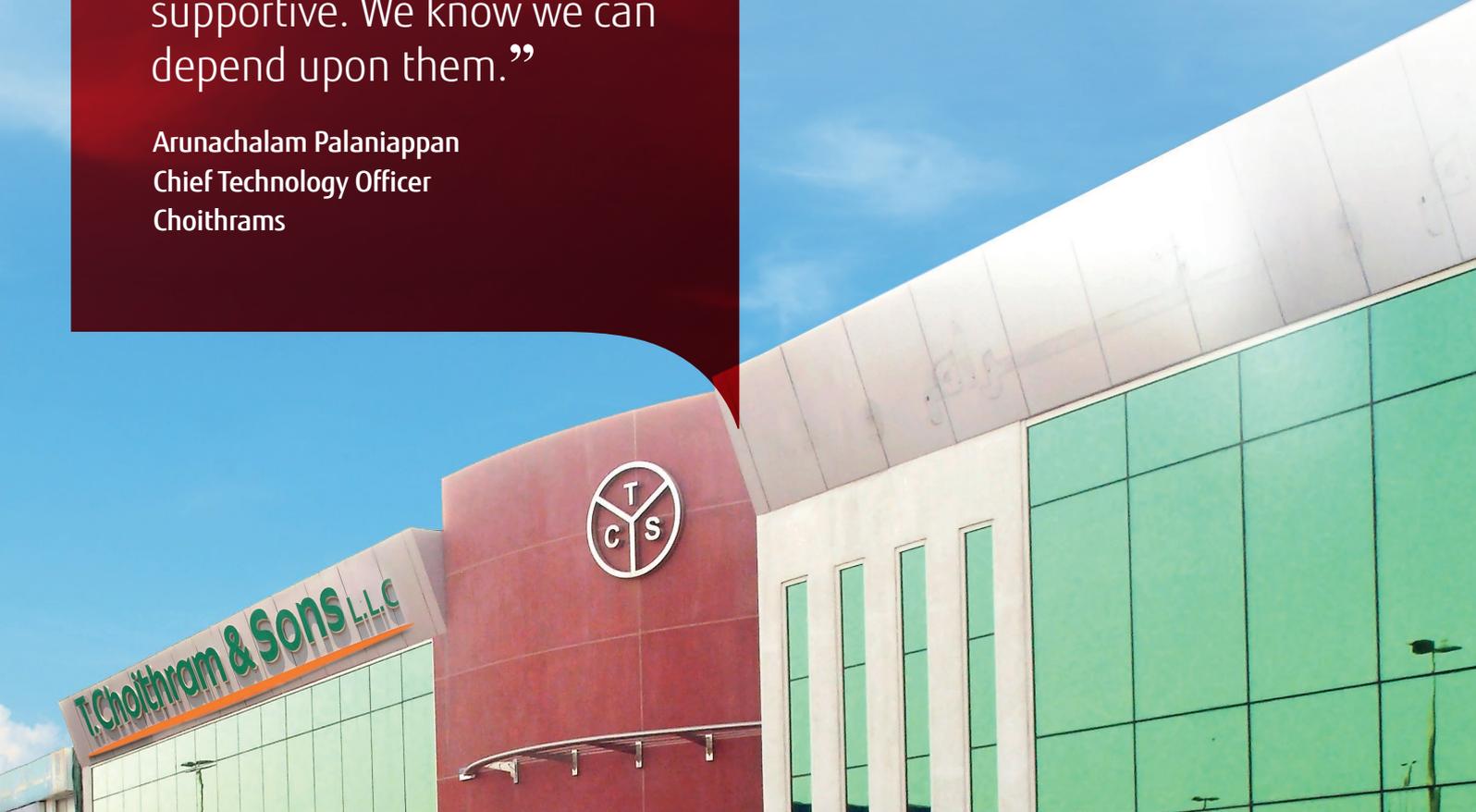
Choithrams upgrades to FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for SAP HANA®, resulting in a five-fold performance increase and better inventory visibility.

At a glance
Country: UAE
Industry: Retail
Founded: 1974
Website: choithrams.com

Challenge
Choithrams' aging SAP platform was reaching end of life and lacked the capacity to handle the growing business. The company wanted to find a more flexible, virtualized solution.

Solution
Choithrams worked with the local UAE Fujitsu team and Fujitsu Germany Labs to pre-configure Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for SAP HANA®, consisting of PRIMERGY servers, ETERNUS storage, and Brocade Networking Solutions switches, running SAP HANA on SUSE and VMware. This now supports 300 users across almost 50 sites.

Benefit
- Performance is five times faster, boosting productivity
- Reports now produced in minutes rather than hours
- Improved inventory visibility, enhancing efficiency
- Scalable solution enables easy future growth
- Virtualization makes management and provisioning simple

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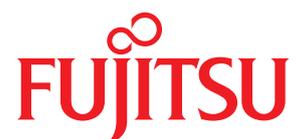
Customer

The first Choithrams Supermarket and Department Store was established in the UAE over three decades ago. Since then, many additional stores have opened in locations across the seven Emirate states. The company provides a wide range of groceries, from fruit and vegetables to meat, bread, and ready meals. The efficiency of the chain was recognized when Choithrams was awarded the first ever "Grocer of the year" RetailME award in 2005 for overall excellence in the field of food retailing.

Products and Services

FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for SAP HANA®:
- 2 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX4770 1.5TB with FUJITSU JX40 JBOD storage subsystem
- 4 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX2540
- 1 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX1330
- FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX200 with 28TB capacity

- 2 x FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS CS200c Backup Appliance with Commvault software, of 12TB and 6TB each
- SLA 24/7 for 60 months in addition to the Fujitsu SAP Solution Contract
- Comprehensive SAP HANA pre-load and Data Center Integration Services

Upgrading to SAP HANA

Choithrams had been running its critical SAP platform on an aging HP-UX platform which was reaching end of life. This led to poor performance and data storage reaching full capacity as the chain continued to grow. It therefore wanted to find a Linux based alternative built on market leading hardware.

"The user numbers had increased, and speed of performance was becoming a real concern. It made for a frustrating user experience, with many complaints about applications hanging and freezing," explains Lalit Motiramani, Head of IT, Choithrams. "Looking to the future, we wanted to introduce SAP HANA on a Linux platform and x86 hardware with a blend of traditional and All-Flash storage."

Choithrams undertook a careful evaluation of the market in tandem with its longstanding local IT partner NTT Data. Following a trip to Fujitsu Labs and an assessment of its existing SAP HANA customer references, Choithrams decided that Fujitsu would be the best partner to offer the technology, support, and SAP expertise required for this ambitious innovation project.

"Fujitsu had a tangible presence in the local market and could offer end-to-end support, including managing third parties such as SUSE," adds Motiramani. "We spoke to several other Fujitsu customers using SAP HANA and it became clear that it offered the best all-in-one, wrap-around solution."

A fast and seamless migration

Fujitsu pre-configured and delivered the FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for SAP HANA® system, consisting of two SAP HANA PRIMERGY RX4770 servers, one ETERNUS DX200 with 28TB storage capacity, four PRIMERGY application RX2540 servers, one PRIMERGY Monitoring and Management RX1330 server, and two ETERNUS CS200c for Primary and DR sites with Commvault backup software.

"The hardware installation was seamless because all moving parts were well tagged, so it was essentially a plug and play solution," continues Motiramani. "We then commenced a series of workshops, training sessions, and documentation production to ensure the best knowledge transfer from Fujitsu's teams both here and in Germany."

With the new SAP HANA platform in place, it ran in parallel with the existing SAP/Oracle environment as terabytes of data were transitioned in chunks. The new solution includes all standard SAP modules, including ERP, Logistics, Financial Accounting, and Sales and Distribution, plus SAP innovations that are based on SAP HANA.

"In total it took just one month to build, migrate, and bring users on-board, which is remarkably quick and is due to the precise planning we undertook with Fujitsu aligned with our SAP consulting partner," says Arunachalam Palaniappan, Chief Technology Officer, Choithrams. "Now we can manage stock and inventory more effectively across our 42 retail outlets and provide our users with real-time data access."

Speed, scalability, visibility

Choithrams now experiences performance speeds five times faster than previously available, which in turn has increased user satisfaction and boosted productivity. The new FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for SAP HANA solution is also scalable and boasts in-built backup across two sites with ETERNUS CS200c backup appliances.

"The new, real-time backup functionality is really helping us because beforehand it was not happening properly at all, leaving the business at risk," comments Motiramani. "We also enjoy rapid support from Fujitsu – whenever we have an issue, which is rare. This frees us up to concentrate on business strategy."

The virtualization of the environment, using VMware, makes it more flexible to manage the SAP landscape, while SAP HANA itself enables Choithrams to respond faster to customers, support management with business analytics, and produce reports in minutes. For example, ROI reports that once would take days can now be processed almost instantly.

"Billing now takes less than a second, which is a huge improvement. At the same time, we have much better inventory visibility, which means we can make smarter decisions and be more responsive to changing market demands," remarks Arunachalam. "The FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX for SAP HANA really enables enhanced analytics and a flexible landscape for future growth."

The new SAP HANA landscape provides a high-performing, versatile, robust environment that can meet the company's needs, now and well into the future. The only remaining step to be taken is the installation of the second-site disaster recovery extension.

"To be honest, there was a lot of apprehension regarding moving to Fujitsu hardware and support, however, I'm delighted to report that Fujitsu gave us the commitment, support, and performance we were looking for," concludes Arunachalam. "The local team is incredibly supportive, with a professional, collaborative approach. We know we can depend upon them."

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