

Case Study

Barrie Knitwear

»PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box is a resilient, reliable and flexible platform that will support our business and growth... It allows us to quickly provision new services while minimising downtime. It is a cost-effective, simple solution that meets our needs exactly.«

Mark Kirkwood, IT Manager, Barrie Knitwear



The customer

Established in 1903 and located in Hawick, UK, Barrie Knitwear produces and sells luxury clothing and employs approximately 190 people.

The challenge

Over the years, Barrie Knitwear had built up a diverse collection of six standalone physical servers, each supporting a variety of operational areas, including HR, finance and office tools. The problem this presented was that if one server went down, it had a significant impact on the business.

“When our old servers failed, we would have to rebuild them and reinstall the operating system, applications and data,” explains Mark Kirkwood, IT Manager, Barrie Knitwear. “This could take two or three days to complete, during which time certain services would not be available to the business. If email goes down for any length of time, it feels like the end of the world.”

The company wanted to move to a virtualised server and storage environment that would provide 100 per cent uptime but it also wanted a solution that would be simple to install and manage.

“We wanted something we could plug in straight out-of-the box that would give us sufficient capacity for the next five to ten years,” adds Kirkwood. “However, we had no experience with virtualisation and found the competing solutions confusing. There were multiple modules and options available but few vendors seemed keen to explain them to a layperson.”

The solution

PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box is a complete Microsoft server environment and a perfect fit for organisations with experience in the administration of Microsoft Windows Server. It is a ready-to-use solution, meaning Barrie Knitwear could simply plug it in, spend a few minutes with the configuration wizard and be ready to go. Designed for SME and mid-market organisations, PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box offers continuous availability at reasonable costs to protect important data and business-critical services.

The customer

Country: United Kingdom
Sector: Manufacturing
Founded in: 1903
Employees: 190
Website: www.barrie.co.uk

The challenge

Barrie Knitwear wanted to replace its six aging legacy servers with a virtualised environment that would minimise downtime and simplify management.

The solution

It decided to deploy FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box – a high availability, all-in-one appliance based on servers, storage and Microsoft Windows Server 2012.

The benefit

- PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box is a true plug and play solution that can be installed and configured in less than 30 minutes, providing a resilient, reliable and flexible server and storage platform
- Dual servers and power supplies, and shared resilient disk provide increased availability
- By removing the need for multiple OS licences it will save Barrie Knitwear money
- It will also reduce energy consumption, leading to lower electricity bills
- Easily scalable to meet future business needs, by adding virtual servers at no cost

"It literally comes as one box containing two PRIMERGY blades, shared storage, network connectivity and two power cables. We could simply plug and play," continues Kirkwood. "It took us maybe thirty minutes to get it up and running because all we needed to do was screw into the rack, plug it in and switch it on."

PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box comes pre-installed with Windows Server 2012 and Microsoft Hyper-V and Kirkwood and his team are now undergoing the process of migrating the core business applications across. These include Temacs, a fully integrated management information system specifically designed for the garment manufacturing industry with special features for the knitwear sector, and SAGE Line 200 for finances.

"It is a seamless transition and easy to use because it has the same look and feel as a traditional Windows server environment," says Kirkwood. "From a user perspective, the only difference they notice is improved performance."

The benefit

Kirkwood is already noticing the key advantage of working in a virtual environment. Because it dynamically reprovisions servers if anything goes wrong, downtime will soon be a thing of the past. And the fact that updates and backup are also automated will save considerable time. With two CPU and 48GB memory in each of the PRIMERGY servers, plus 8 x 1Tb disks included in the box, Barrie Knitwear will have more than enough capacity for years to come.

Products and services

FUJITSU Integrated System PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box:

- FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY CX420 S1 multi node server chassis (with up to 12 x 3.5 dual SAS disk drives)
- 2 x 1,200W Power Supplies
- 2 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY CX272 S1, each with:
 - 2 x Xeon E5-2630 6C/12T 2.30 GHz CPU
 - 48Gb DDR3-1600 R ECC RAM
 - 2 x 500Gb SATA 6G 7.2K mirrored Boot Disk
 - Microsoft Windows Server 2012 Datacenterk
- 8 x 1Tb 7.2K 6G SAS HOT PL 3.5" Hard Disk

"It is a resilient, reliable and flexible platform that will support our business and growth. It will save me time and effort because firefighting faulty servers is no longer necessary," comments Kirkwood. "In addition, because we won't need to upgrade multiple OS licences, it will actually cut operational costs in the long run."

Barrie Knitwear also expects its energy bills to fall once all the legacy servers have been decommissioned, bringing further cost savings.

Conclusion

"I like to keep things simple and PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box enables me to do that. The virtual machines boot up in seconds, making it easy and fast to make changes on the fly," concludes Kirkwood. "I've been so impressed with the elegance and effectiveness of this solution that I'll certainly bear Fujitsu in mind for future projects and further expansion."

Barrie Knitwear can now provision servers in any configuration at a cost that is a fraction of the competition. Should the company reach peak, it can easily add more storage or enhance server capacity. PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box is proving the perfect fit for this ambitious clothing manufacturer.

"PRIMEFLEX Cluster-in-a-box is the ideal size for our business and allows us to quickly provision new services while minimising downtime. It is a cost-effective, simple solution that meets our needs exactly."

Mark Kirkwood, IT Manager, Barrie Knitwear

Contact

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