Laltex
GROUP
EST. 1962

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Paul Bentley
IT Manager
Laltex

Laltex has installed FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS AF250 with PRIMERGY RX2540 servers for 20x faster performance, improved reliability and simple scalability.

At a glance
Country: United Kingdom
Industry: Manufacturing
Founded: 1948
Website: laltex.com

Challenge
Laltex wanted to replace its aging storage system and outdated thin clients with a new infrastructure that could support its ongoing growth. However, with only two IT staff, the new system had to be simple to manage.

Solution
Working with local IT specialist Central Networks, Laltex deployed FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS AF250 with PRIMERGY RX2540 servers to support 120 users.

Benefit
■ Virtual machines can be cloned in minutes, not hours
■ Key tasks can be completed up to 75 per cent faster
■ Fujitsu ETERNUS AF250 outperforms the old system by approximately twenty times while latency has reduced from 200ms to 5ms
■ Optimal reliability means no hardware issues in year one
■ Simple management reduces burden on small IT team

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FUJITSU

Customer

Based in the UK, Laltex Group has been in business for over 50 years providing a range of over 7,000 product lines, including small domestic appliances, lighting, personal care, fashion accessories, clothing, nightwear, footwear, umbrellas, promotional items, bags, conference folders and bespoke promotional merchandise. A global network of suppliers brings Laltex customers innovative products from around the world for the wholesale, retail and promotional markets.

Products and Services

- FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS AF250
- FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX2540

Upgrading critical storage

Laltex had been dependent on an aging fleet of Oracle Sun Ray thin clients, supported by a storage platform that originally had just 800GB backbone. Not only was the technology reaching end-of-life, but the company had also more than doubled in size in only seven years, which unsurprisingly put further strain on the infrastructure. The company therefore wanted to refresh its end-user devices while boosting its storage capacity and performance.

"As a company, we are heavily geared towards graphical output because retail demands lots of promotional artwork, which means we need sufficient storage and performance speeds that won't let the users down," explains Paul Bentley, IT Manager, Laltex. "At the same time, the IT department consists of me and just one other person, so any new equipment had to be simple to manage."

Laltex has partnered with local IT specialist, Central Networks, for almost a decade and asked it for advice on how best to upgrade its storage platform. This was part of a wider office refurbishment which also gave the company an opportunity to install a new network infrastructure with fibre channels for optimal connectivity.

"We looked at a number of options and undertook some benchmarking with a VMware Horizon proof of concept," adds Bentley. "What became clear is that taking an All-Flash approach is now cost-effective while providing significant improvements in performance and reliability."

A scalable storage solution with a cast iron guarantee

After evaluating the market, Laltex chose FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS AF250, which delivers impressive IOPS performance with lowest latency even at full load. It offers a solution that resolves all performance issues in critical applications, including real-time business analytics and VDI environments, without requiring any complicated tuning, making it perfect for Laltex and its tiny IT team.

"The two driving reasons for choosing Fujitsu were that, unlike its competition, it is modular and expandable so we know we can scale easily moving forward and, more importantly, Fujitsu gave us a guarantee that it would replace it with no quibbles if anything went wrong," says Bentley. "That level of commitment gave us further confidence."

Laltex ran its existing SAN in parallel with the new Fujitsu ETERNUS AF250 for 10 weeks while it gradually migrated its data and applications. The company was able to take its proof of concept device and replicate it in a live environment, which made the migration process much faster and simpler.

"Going live could have taken us upwards of six months but, thanks to the Fujitsu ETERNUS AF250 replication we brought that down to just 10 weeks and made the entire transition much easier to handle," continues Bentley. "We now have a rock-solid storage platform that supports over 60 virtual machines, 108 10ZiG thin clients as well as twelve Macs for artwork."

Improved performance, increased reliability

Using the ETERNUS AF250, Laltex can now take a snapshot of its virtual machines and clone them across its three Fujitsu PRIMERGY RX2540 servers in a matter of minutes, not hours. Log-in times have reduced dramatically, while the functionality of key database tasks, including reports, has also reduced significantly, in some cases by 75 per cent from 20 to five minutes. All of this combines to make users more productive while reducing the burden on the IT team. Moreover, with only twelve of the Fujitsu ETERNUS AF250 24 bays currently occupied, it will be easy for Laltex to add cost-effective additional storage capacity as and when it is needed.

"Our management overhead has reduced considerably because the Fujitsu servers and storage are significantly more reliable and much simpler to operate with in-built automated quality of service," comments Bentley. "At the same time, performance has improved exponentially, making applications faster and more responsive."

To test exactly how much performance had improved, Central Networks carried out a number of benchmarks against the previous SAN, using the Crystal Disk Mark. This showed the Fujitsu ETERNUS AF250 outperforming the old system by approximately twenty times, while latency had reduced from 200ms to 5ms.

"We have had the Fujitsu storage platform in place for a year now and, in that time, we have had zero issues with the kit, which obviously makes my life much easier, given the firefighting we previously dealt with on a daily basis," concludes Bentley. "Business continuity is important to us and this Fujitsu solution has given us a robust, high-performing platform that ensures continuity across the business."

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