



Success Story

SAP Solutions

Les Entreprises Barrette

Les Entreprises Barrette wanted to keep its manufacturing processes across North America working as rapidly and smoothly as possible—but its existing platform for business systems suffered performance and availability issues. When the time came to refresh its SAP solution, the company migrated to a high-availability architecture based on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server and VMware for faster, more open and more flexible systems with ultra-high availability, supporting the timely and reliable delivery of products to customers.



Overview

From humble beginnings as a single sawmill in a small town 400 miles north of Montreal in 1924, Les Entreprises Barrette (Barrette) has grown to become one of North America's largest manufacturers of wood and vinyl building materials. The company's output ranges from sawmilling and engineered wood to manufacturing outdoor living products such as wood and vinyl fences.

Challenge

Barrette's manufacturing plants in North America work on 24-hour shifts, and SAP ERP software is used to manage

practically all processes, starting with the receipt of raw materials via RF scanners. As a result, it is critically important for the company to be able to keep the software running at all times. When Barrette decided to move to the SAP HANA database as the first step towards a future migration to SAP S/4HANA, it knew that its existing infrastructure was not up to the challenge.

Marc Saulnier, IT Director at Les Entreprises Barrette, says: "We depend on high performance and availability from SAP ERP to keep our operations running smoothly. SAP HANA in-memory technology offered a way to increase software performance significantly, and we wanted to move to a new platform to take full advantage."

The existing platform - IBM AIX on IBM Power servers with IBM Db2 database - was seen as overly complex by Barrette, and the costs for renewing it were high. Equally, the high-availability architecture was relatively unreliable. With a daily window of barely 30 minutes for system maintenance, Barrette wanted a new platform that would give it easier and more reliable failover capabilities.

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MARC SAULNIER

IT Director

Les Entreprises Barrette



Les Entreprises Barrette at a Glance:

Les Entreprises Barrette is one of North America's largest wood and vinyl building material manufacturers. Its four divisions encompass sawmilling, remanufactured wood, engineered wood, and vinyl and aluminum outdoor living products.

■ Industry and Location

Manufacturing, Quebec, Canada

■ Product and Services

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications
SUSE Linux Enterprise High Availability Extension

■ Results

- + Increases processing speed with SAP HANA
- + Ensures ultra-high availability for key systems
- + Saves over USD100k in software subscription fees

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Solution

Barrette chose to migrate from Db2 to SAP HANA, and from AIX on Power to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications on x86-architecture servers.

Saulnier remarks: “The strong partnership between SUSE and SAP, the history of HANA on the SUSE OS, and the high market share of this platform among SAP users all convinced us that choosing SUSE Enterprise Linux Server was a no-brainer.”

Starting from SAP ECC6 EHP 7, Barrette performed a Unicode conversion on its data as part of a move to ECC7, then migrated to the HANA in-memory database to serve its SAP ECC, APO, TM and PI environments.

“We wanted our systems to be flexible and open, so that we are not tied down to a single technology provider,” says Saulnier. “The fact that SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications is an open source solution gives us more flexibility to adapt the technology and keep our options open as our business needs change.”

With help from its technology partner Malavix, Barrette completed the migration of its entire SAP Business Suite landscape to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications in a clustered deployment between two data centers one kilometer apart. “The migration was relatively easy to manage,” comments Saulnier. “We are using three types of clustering technology:

NFS with DRDB [distributed replicated storage system] for storage, ASCS [ABAP SAP Central Services] for SAP applications, and SAP HANA Replication for the database. After the migration, we engaged SUSE Engineering Services to validate our new environment.”

Saulnier adds: “Our AIX engineers found it quick and easy to adapt to the new OS. They are also much more comfortable working with VMware than with the previous hypervisor.”

Results

Following the implementation of the new SUSE and SAP solutions, Barrette benefits from accelerated system performance and near-100 percent availability, helping the company to keep manufacturing processes running rapidly and efficiently around the clock. Ultimately, this translates into better customer service at lower costs.

“With SAP HANA and SAP Business Suite running on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications, we have increased the speed of our ERP solution,” says Saulnier. “More importantly, the availability of the solution is significantly enhanced, and we have more control in terms of failing over production systems.”

Compared with the previous high-availability architecture, Barrette finds the built-in SUSE Linux Enterprise High Availability Extension much simpler and more reliable. The solution also gives

more control to technicians, making it easier to temporarily fail over SAP production systems to backup hardware in order to perform hardware maintenance or OS upgrades.

“Being open source makes the SUSE solution more flexible, and helps us avoid being locked into a single hardware provider,” says Saulnier. “And thanks in part to the integrated HA feature, we are saving an estimated USD100,000 on software subscription costs compared to our previous solution.”