



Success Story

Server

Mahindra Retail

Mahindra Retail selected SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server running on HP blade servers as the platform for its SAP ERP environment. The operating system combines high availability with low total cost of ownership, giving Mahindra Retail a solid foundation for its quickly growing business.



Overview

Mahindra Retail operates the Mom & Me chain of stores in India, which is rapidly expanding toward a planned 100 outlets. The stores sell products and services aimed at pregnant women and at children from birth to nine years old. Mahindra Retail is part of the US\$6.3 billion Mahindra Group, one of the top ten industrial businesses in India.

Challenge

Many Mahindra Group companies use SAP software as their standard ERP system. The SAP at Mahindra was already running four different instances of SAP ERP 6.0 for Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. and other group companies. These were running on a variety of platforms: IBM AIX for the largest 2,000-plus user instance and a mix of Linux and Microsoft Windows for the other, smaller instances.

When the Mahindra Retail business was launched, the challenge was to find a

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VIJAY MAHAJAN

Sr. GM IT Infrastructure, Corporate IT
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platform for SAP that would offer high levels of performance and availability without correspondingly high initial and ongoing costs. The new business wanted to focus on capital and operational expenditures and on rapidly expanding from four stores to a planned 100 stores across India. Moreover, it did not want to divert investment to a costly proprietary UNIX platform.

“We wanted to take advantage of the growing trend for enterprise-quality solutions on commodity hardware,” said Vijay Mahajan, senior general manager of IT infrastructure, Corporate IT, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ltd. “Linux on x86 hardware was clearly a good way to minimize costs without sacrificing reliability.”

Solution

Following a detailed evaluation of possible platforms and discussions with the Gartner Group, Corporate IT at Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. selected SUSE Linux Enterprise Server as its platform for the new SAP environment. The company chose to deploy the operating system on a cluster of HP BL460 blade servers with quad-core Intel Xeon processors.

The SAP production environment for Mahindra Retail consists of two blades in an active/passive configuration for the Oracle database and the SAP central instance, with a further two blades for the SAP applications.



Mahindra Retail at a glance:

Pan-Indian mother-and-baby retail chain

■ Industry and Location

Retail, India

■ Products and Services

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

■ Results

- + *Provided low-cost, high-availability platform for SAP ERP*
- + *Enabled enterprise-class solution on commodity hardware*
- + *Achieved high availability for mission-critical workloads*

“SUSE Linux Enterprise Server gives us a strong price/performance advantage over proprietary UNIX and Microsoft Windows as a platform for SAP ERP, and it offers enterprise levels of reliability and support.”

SUHAS MHASKAR

*General Manager, Corporate IT
Mahindra & Mahindra, Ltd.*

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“HP delivered the entire solution—both hardware and software—from a single point of contact, and they also provide a single support contract,” said Mahajan. “The high-availability clustering is an integral part of the SUSE Linux Enterprise platform, which meant that we were able to avoid the high cost of a proprietary piece of software.”

The SAP ERP environment is integrated using SAP NetWeaver Process Integration middleware with Mahindra Retail’s Triversity Point of Sale (POS) solution, enabling the sharing of information on pricing, stock levels and promotions. About 100 employees in Mahindra Retail’s Bangalore headquarters are already using SAP, along with a couple of employees in each of the stores. The company anticipates the total number of users to be between 200 and 300.

“The feedback from users is excellent—they report perfect availability and low response time for SAP ERP running on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server,” said Prasad Patil, manager of IT, Corporate IT, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ltd. “Of course, the business is more interested in performance of the particular solution than the platform behind—the concern is much more whether that platform is delivering to the agreed service levels. In our experience, SUSE Linux Enterprise Server provides a robust, high-performance platform for SAP ERP, even on relatively low-cost Intel processor-based hardware.”

Mahindra Retail’s SAP ERP environment is linked to a shared SAP NetWeaver BW system that runs consolidated financial reporting and business intelligence for the entire group.

Results

With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server running on HP blade servers, Mahindra Retail has a low-cost, highly available platform for its SAP ERP environment. As the company embarks on its ambitious program of new store openings, the solution has ample capacity to ensure continued excellent performance and availability.

“All of our platform decisions are driven by the underlying business requirements, in terms of balancing the cost of ownership against the required levels of performance, availability and security,” said Suhas Mhaskar, general manager, Corporate IT, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ltd. “SUSE Linux Enterprise Server gives us a strong price/performance advantage over proprietary UNIX and Microsoft Windows as a platform for SAP ERP, and it offers enterprise levels of reliability and support.”

Mahindra Retail takes advantage of the high-availability clustering solution in the SUSE Linux Enterprise platform for its business-critical SAP systems. In addition to minimizing the support overhead, this helped keep acquisition costs low by removing the need to invest in a proprietary solution for high availability.

“SUSE Linux Enterprise Server has provided the availability we needed for Mahindra Retail within a single, cost-effective package,” said Mahajan. “The ability to do this on commodity hardware was a significant benefit, and we are now exploring the possibility of migrating our other larger SAP environments to the same platform.”



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