Trans Business

If key sales systems at Trans Business are unavailable, the company could lose up to US$5 million in potential revenues per day. Dissatisfied with its existing Red Hat Enterprise Linux platform for SAP ERP, Trans Business opted to migrate to SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications with SUSE Linux Enterprise High Availability Extension. Since then, the company has enjoyed a perfect availability record, along with substantially improved performance and ease of management.

Overview

Trans Business for Trading and Distribution LLC is the distributor of Philip Morris International tobacco products in Egypt. The company distributes some of the country's top-selling cigarette brands, including L&M Blue and Red, Marlboro Red and Gold, and Merit.

Challenge

To keep vendors stocked, the Trans Business salesforce works in the field six days a week from 7:00am to 9:00pm, generating approximately EGP100 million (US$5 million) in cash sales daily. To book sales and generate invoices, employees use handheld terminals connected directly to the company's SAP ERP applications. With no manual sales systems to fall back on in the event of a technology outage, Trans Business sets a high premium on the reliability and availability of its core systems.

Ahmed Samy, Head of IT at Trans Business, said: "Although we run both a clustered high-availability environment and a separate disaster-recovery landscape for SAP ERP, on two occasions we nevertheless suffered a complete halt in production caused by an operating system outage—once for a couple of hours, and once for a whole day. This represented up to US$8 million in lost revenue."

Aiming to protect against future unplanned downtime, Trans Business decided to migrate away from the Red Hat Enterprise Linux operating system that supported its SAP ERP landscape.
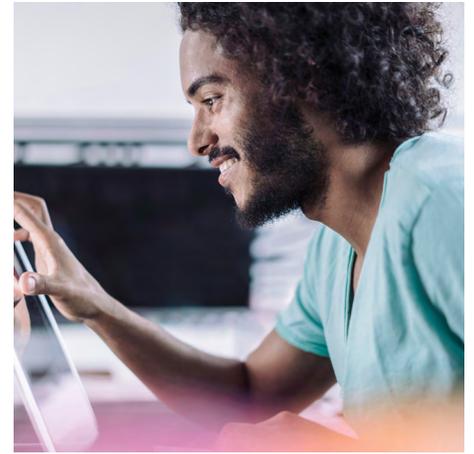
Solution

Following recommendations from SAP, Trans Business selected SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications and migrated from Sybase to SAP HANA for the database layer.

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> **AHMED SAMY**
> *Head of IT*
> Trans Business

Trans Business at a Glance:
Trans Business for Trading and Distribution LLC is the national distributor for Philip Morris tobacco products in Egypt.

■ **Industry and Location**
  Distribution, Egypt

■ **Product and Services**
  SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications
  SUSE Linux Enterprise High Availability Extension

■ **Results**
  + *Provides exceptional stability and uptime for SAP ERP and SAP HANA*
  + *Boosts performance, cutting report-generation time from hours to seconds*
  + *Strong system performance enables sales teams to work uninterrupted*

ongoing investments to ensure we stay up to date on the latest technologies that enhance availability, reliability and performance, including the adoption of best-of-breed solutions like SAP HANA and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server."

Trans Business worked with Master Linux, a regional leader in open source technology, to perform the migrations. Master Linux made use of the saptune utility that ships with the SUSE operating system to perform comprehensive tuning and configuration, ensuring that all deployed SAP systems perform well and work together without problems.

"Master Linux completed the work to a very high standard and helped make the migration process seamless and non-disruptive," said Ahmed Samy.

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications ships pre-tuned for the demands of SAP ERP, and includes bundled HA components that competing vendors sell separately.

"A key advantage of the SUSE operating system is that, unlike the Red Hat offering, it did not require us to buy any add-ons from SAP to create the high-availability environment," said Ahmed Samy. "SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications comes with all of the required HA components, so it's simple to buy and deploy."

Since the migration, Trans Business has extensively tested the SUSE system's failover functionality, and found it to be completely reliable. "Moving to the HA instance is fully automated, and we have successfully tested going back and forth between production and HA on a number of occasions," said Ahmed Samy. "In general, it's much easier and more dependable than it was previously with the Red Hat distribution."

Results

Migrating from Red Hat Enterprise Linux to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications produced immediate improvements in system performance and availability for Trans Business. The IT team saw a significant reduction in the number of issues flagged in its weekly SAP EarlyWatch Alert reports, and there have been no incidents of unplanned downtime since the switch.

"By migrating to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications, we have achieved our primary goal of avoiding costly downtime," said Ahmed Samy. "We have had zero problems with availability, so our sales teams have been able to work uninterrupted."

As Trans Business also migrated from a conventional relational database to the columnar, in-memory SAP HANA database, the company achieved substantial performance improvements. For example, a regular business report that previously took two hours to run now completes in a matter of seconds. In other cases, reports that once took six hours to run are now complete in less than one minute.

Ahmed Samy said: "Of course, HANA is a much faster database platform, but I believe the performance improvements we've seen are at least 20 percent due to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. The environment is easier to manage, and my team is much less dependent on external help to keep the operating system running in optimal condition."