CUSTOMER: Global eProcure

CHALLENGE: To move the company toward full virtualization with a comprehensive disaster recovery plan in place.

GEP has three corporate data centers, working towards full virtualization.

StorTrends JBODs give GEP ample room to grow within its current configuration.

StorTrends® and GEP: A Partnership to Support Procurement - StorTrends Protects GEP's SAS Model

True Procurement Subject Matter Expertise for the Globe

Headquartered in Clark, NJ, GEP is gaining recognition throughout the world as one of the procurement industry's smartest service and technology providers. It is because GEP eats, sleeps and breathes procurement. Leveraging their collective experience, the company has built an impressive service offering for customers in North America, South America, Europe and Asia.

That offering includes a suite of SAS-based software applications and modules to help procurement departments automate key processes like spend, supplier management, contract management and purchasing. Software-as-a-service gives GEP customers the type of flexibility and easy implementations that they've come to expect. Supporting these technologies is the primary mission of the GEP IT department. Not willing to risk customer data or application downtime, they were very careful when it came time to select a data storage solution for their three data centers.

That solution: StorTrends from American Megatrends Inc. (AMI).

Journey to Full Virtualization Supported by StorTrends

GEP, like hundreds of other companies, has recognized the cost savings and efficiency gains of a virtualized environment. On the path towards full virtualization, they currently have approximately 50 VMware VNX servers supporting their enterprise across their three U.S. data centers. These VMs, mapped to specific GEP SAS applications and internal systems (e.g. ERP, CRM) are backed up by Cisco network switches, a cluster of SQL 2008 databases, and a StorTrends installation that includes two 7.2 TB StorTrends arrays in an HA pair and an additional 4.8 TB StorTrends array for backup and archiving.

The HA pair is supported by two StorTrends 3202j's – JBOD enclosures that provide up to 256 TB of additional capacity. In the GEP set up, each JBOD currently supports 7.2 TB of add-on capacity.

So why did GEP IT opt for StorTrends with so many storage options to choose from? Let's take a look in the next section.

In StorTrends We Trust

When GEP IT, led by Technology Infrastructure Manager Ganesh Chalke, began their search for storage, they approached their IT services partner and hardware reseller and laid out a list of top priorities: ease-of-use, quality support, scalability, performance, VMware compatibility and affordability. When their partner came back with StorTrends from AMI, it was an easy decision. It's a decision they haven't regretted.

In terms of addressing GEP priorities, StorTrends has met the challenge. StorTrends JBODs give GEP ample room to grow within its current configuration. Forklift upgrades won't be necessary as the business and data scale. As the customer base grows, and as GEP rolls our new software modules and applications, the GEP IT team can simply add more JBODs to the existing footprint to grow capacity to plus 256 TBs if needed.

StorTrends®
Performance Storage. Proven Value.

> "The ManageTrends GUI is remarkably easy to learn and use. You don't have to be an experienced storage architect. Within 15 minutes, you know all you need to create a new volume. It's really the best storage GUI I've seen to date."
>
> *- **Ganesh Chalke,***
> *Technology Infrastructure Manager*
> *Global eProcure*

Performance metrics have been achieved thanks to features that include truly automated data tiering and Zoned Bit Recording (ZBT). A built-in feature in both StorTrends single and dual controller models, ZBT automatically pushes the "hottest" data to the outer tier of the fastest SAS drives in GEP's StorTrends arrays, ensuring maximum performance and speed for the data that employees and customers access the most. The HA configuration, set up within a matter of minutes, also ensures top level performance. The data is redundant and secure in the event of a controller failure.

StorTrends is also fully certified with VMware, most recently with ESXi™ 5.1. But for Ganesh and the rest of the GEP IT team, the true gem of the StorTrends solutions is the ManageTrends software GUI. Like many other StorTrends customers, the GEP IT team finds the GUI extremely user friendly and easy to master. Ganesh notes that "the ManageTrends GUI is remarkably easy to learn and use. You don't have to be an experienced storage architect. Within 15 minutes, you know all you need to create a new volume. It's really the best storage GUI I've seen to date."

Adding to their current level of satisfaction is the support that Ganesh and his team receive from the StorTrends StorAID team in Norcross, GA. Unlike a number of StorTrends competitors, StorAID comes at a fixed fee, helping decrease total cost of ownership over the length of a standard contract. More importantly, the StorAID team are all true storage experts. Calls aren't handled by Tier I support reps with little to no training. StorAID support staff have deep product expertise. They also have the ability to walk across the hall and talk to the team that actually developed the product. And if an issue arises that they can't answer, customers like GEP have the ability to speak directly with engineers on the StorTrends development team. It's truly unique in the industry. "StorTrends support is really best-in-class. First of all, we always get someone on the phone. And if we need to, we can go direct to the engineering team. It's a very unique customer/vendor relationship that I haven't seen anywhere else," said Ganesh.

With StorTrends in place, GEP IT can move forward with its strategic plan – one that includes full virtualization within the next 12-24 months (including virtual desktops) and a comprehensive disaster recovery solution based on StorTrends replication capabilities. A satisfied customer indeed!

For more information on the Global eProcure, please visit: http://www.gep.com/

For more information on StorTrends from American Megatrends, Inc., please visit: http://www.stortrends.com

IT Quick Facts:
Three corporate data centers, working toward full virtualization:

- Currently Utilize approx. 50 VMware VNX servers

- 12 physical servers, SQL 2008 cluster

- Cisco network switches

- Three 7.2 TB StorTrends arrays (HA pair), one additional 4.8 TB StorTrends and two 7.2 TB JBODS

- Total Capacity of 34 TBs