

Jamcracker, Inc.

Jamcracker uses SUSE LINUX Enterprise Server on IBM eServer xSeries servers to cut costs, enable new product line.

Overview

Jamcracker, Inc., established in 1999, has built its success around managed services that allowed its customers to consume applications like a utility. Since then, Jamcracker has become the pioneer in the ASP Aggregator space, supporting businesses in the financial services, high tech, and government sectors, among others. Recently, Jamcracker translated its wealth of experience in the Managed Services business to build the industry's first fully integrated service management and delivery application sold by service providers and utilized by customers on their own servers: Pivot Path.

Challenge

Jamcracker's original Managed Services application was strictly an in-house implementation that supported the company's Managed Services offering. While much of that service incorporated Jamcracker code, it also utilized the services of a wide variety of third-party products, making it a complex solution that required a Solaris operating system running on SUN servers. With the combined power of this super-sized hardware, heavy-duty OS and Jamcracker's own Managed Services solution, the company was able to offer their customers "on demand" access to a large number of business applications, allowing customers to "lease" the use of these applications based on a per-usage billing rather than license ownership.

However, while the SUN/Solaris solution was powerful, it was also tremendously expensive. Licensing and maintenance costs were significant, and the need to run other Solaris-friendly applications raised costs stratospherically. Monthly expenses to run its Managed Services offering on this combination of hardware and OS platform placed a burden on Jamcracker's IT budgets, especially after the DOT.COM crash of 2001.

Furthermore, though the SUN/Solaris solution worked for Jamcracker when the company only offered Managed Services leasing to its customers, it got in the way of progress when the company decided to package its code into a pure-product software solution. The new product, called Pivot Path, is an integrated software solution comprised of service, access and provisioning management modules that are easily shared and administered. In addition to continuing as a Managed Service provider, Jamcracker now sells Pivot Path as a software application to corporate customers and service providers. But to make Pivot Path affordable to this broader audience, Jamcracker needed to be able to sell the product on a dramatically reduced hardware footprint—one that would provide all the power of a SUN/Solaris configuration at a fraction of the cost. They also needed to replace many of the expensive third-party Solaris-

compatible products that made their solution work. Moreover, Jamcracker wanted to be able to deploy Pivot Path on an Open Source stack. With these requirements in mind, Jamcracker set about designing and recoding Pivot Path—targeting the use of Intel-based servers and Linux as basic to the product’s development.

The Solution: Novell & IBM

During its development of Pivot Path, Jamcracker designed its new software product to run on Intel-based servers and the Linux OS. Jamcracker quickly found that if the Novell/IBM solution could keep up with the power requirements necessary to support Pivot Path’s architecture, and yet could reduce expenses enough to market Pivot Path affordably, the company itself could leverage those advantages in-house as well. Recognizing the benefits immediately, Jamcracker replaced its SUN servers with IBM eServer x335 servers, a high-performance, rack-dense server that features powerful dual-speed Intel Xeon processors. They then swapped out Solaris with Novell SUSE LINUX Enterprise Server 8, a commercially viable Linux distribution that considerably reduces platform licensing and operating expenses.

“We’re very pleased with how well this transition has gone,” says K.B. Chandrasekhar, founder and CEO of Jamcracker. “The transition to SUSE LINUX not only gave us the reliability and scalability we need to run our own business, but also contributed to significantly lowering our operating costs and allowed us to transition Pivot Path into a pure software product we could sell as an identity solution to our customers. Now we are able to offer Pivot Path on less-prohibitively priced hardware, combining all the core components of our management and delivery infrastructure on a single set of IBM x335 servers.”

Results

Transitioning their Managed Services onto IBM x335 server hardware and a Novell SUSE LINUX Enterprise Server 8 platform has significantly reduced Jamcracker’s own operational costs.

“Instead of experiencing a very expensive SUN upgrade, we saved more than 65 percent TCO as we went through this transition,” says Todd Johnson, ** at Jamcracker. “Literally the ROI—when you make the change from Solaris to Linux, from SUN to IBM—is so spectacular, it just doesn’t add up to keep doing it the old way.”

The primary areas that Jamcracker realized expense savings include:

- Reduced hosting space via server consolidation
- Reduced hardware and software maintenance costs
- Reduced operations headcount via component consolidation
- Elimination of software licensing and maintenance costs for middleware replaced by open source components

"Jamcracker's results are an ideal example of how SUSE LINUX can be an enabler for businesses looking to move from proprietary UNIX systems to lower-cost, standards-based platforms without forfeiting performance or reliability," says Chris Stone, Office of the CEO and vice chairman of Novell, Inc.

IBM agrees: "The savings and reliability Jamcracker achieved with Pivot Path provides an excellent example of the value of simplified infrastructure using IBM xSeries and Novell SUSE LINUX," says Leo Suarez, xSeries vice president, business unit executive for the IBM Server Group. "This is why IBM has partnered with Novell: so customers can simplify their infrastructures and reduce costs."

Transitioning to SUSE LINUX running on IBM servers also allowed Jamcracker to sell its product as a pure application to its customers—and has opened the door to entirely new consumer opportunities. "All the really hot prospects we have right now are all planning to deploy on Linux," Johnson says. "Had this been a Solaris scenario, we know that our pipeline would be less than what it is today. A lot of our target audience is comprised of service providers and ISVs. Linux is a much easier sell for them as well, not just in terms of dollars, but in opportunity as well—in where the customers and partners are taking their own platforms and software strategies."

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