

AutoTradeCenter revs up its e-commerce capabilities with HP, Oracle and Red Hat



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— Jorge Borbolla, Chief Information Officer, AutoTradeCenter



Accelerating capabilities

Challenge

- To solidify its market-leading status, AutoTradeCenter (ATC), a top Internet-based business-to-business automotive remarketing company, turned to HP for help constructing a reliable, stable and responsive e-commerce site (99.99 percent or “four nines” availability).

Solution

- HP Services leveraged the HP-Oracle Competency Center to implement a ProLiant-based Oracle9i RAC application to run the business-critical AutoTradeCenter application on the Red Hat Enterprise Linux AS 2.1 operating system.

Results

- As a result of implementing an adaptive enterprise, ATC is positioned to quickly boost capacity and add new customers.
- The comparatively low cost of the HP StorageWorks MSA 1000 SAN solution allowed ATC to purchase two systems, versus one from Dell, resulting in superior quality assurance, enhanced troubleshooting, and more responsive customer service.
- With the help of HP, ATC implemented a complex e-commerce platform in half the time it would have taken ATC to do it on its own — resulting in significant savings.
- The reliable ProLiant-based solution instills confidence and trust in ATC's Fortune 500 customers.

As one of the world's leading Internet-based automotive remarketing companies, AutoTradeCenter (ATC) has carved out a lucrative niche for its business-to-business e-commerce services. It's an edge honed by technology and backed by service. ATC depends on the performance, reliability, and responsiveness of its HP e-commerce infrastructure to attract and retain blue-chip clients including American Honda Finance Corporation, Audi Financial Services, Daimler Chrysler Financial Services, Volkswagen Credit Inc., Subaru of America, and others.

"In our market, we are viewed as a responsive service provider utilizing cutting-edge technology," emphasizes Jorge Borbolla, Chief Information Officer, AutoTradeCenter. "We insist on 99.99 percent availability; downtime is not an option for AutoTradeCenter. To help us meet this objective, we worked with HP to implement an innovative e-commerce platform. It's fast, reliable and affordable — just what we need to reduce risk and maintain our competitive edge."

As a comparatively small company of 100 employees, ATC must provide high-quality service to attract Fortune 500 customers. If ATC doesn't sell cars, it doesn't make money, so its Internet business must be accessible at all hours. "ATC provides 24x7 access to portfolios representing thousands of vehicles," explains Borbolla. "That's why we put so much stock in our e-commerce solutions, which are based on HP ProLiant servers and the HP Adaptive Enterprise strategy."

Accelerating capabilities, putting the brakes on costs

ATC selected best-of-breed hardware and software vendors for its e-commerce infrastructure. Since online transactions are essential for the company, Borbolla and his team chose Oracle9i Real Application Clusters (RAC) software, a software technology for distributing a single database across multiple servers. Oracle9i RAC ensures seamless operations and allows ATC to establish separate and secure auction portals easily for each of its customers.

As a cost-effective operating system, ATC chose Red Hat Enterprise Linux AS 2.1. "When we compared the cost of

running Oracle9i RAC on the Sun Solaris operating system and the Red Hat Enterprise Linux AS 2.1 operating system, it was apparent that Linux was a much more cost effective solution," recalls Borbolla.

After ATC carefully evaluated Dell and Sun, Borbolla determined that HP possessed the greatest knowledge and experience with Linux. "HP was hands-down a much better choice for us, due to HP's close collaboration with Oracle, extensive Linux experience, great HP ProLiant servers, and mature and affordable HP StorageWorks solutions," he says. "HP provided a turnkey system."

Technology leaders drive innovation

AutoTradeCenter was also impressed with the HP-Oracle Competency Center, where customers can test and configure Oracle9i RAC-Linux solutions in a production environment. "HP helped us replace our Sun servers with HP ProLiant DL580 G2 rack-mounted servers," explains Borbolla. "Thanks to their help, obvious preparation and expertise, we implemented our entire system in only three months — about half as long as it would have taken if we had attempted to do it on our own."

HP, Oracle, and Red Hat work together closely to ensure the Oracle software and the Linux kernel are optimally tuned and configured to the underlying hardware. Recent enhancements include the ability to process database requests asynchronously in the I/O subsystem and support for very large memory capabilities.

Into the fast lane with ProLiant-based infrastructure

Oracle9i RAC is an enterprise-caliber database solution usually purchased by large companies. According to Borbolla, ATC decided to use this software to run its application because it was the easiest and most reliable way to achieve their goals of scalability, availability, and cost control. Both ProLiant server nodes concurrently execute transactions against the clustered database. The RAC software co-ordinates each node's activity to ensure consistency, security, and data integrity.

ATC chose HP ProLiant DL580 G2 servers for the compute nodes. These servers combine excellent performance with four Xeon MP processors and a large memory footprint. Plus, they go beyond typical server high-availability

Hardware

- HP ProLiant Parallel Database Cluster (multi-node DL580 G2 server cluster)
- Two HP StorageWorks Modular SAN Array 1000 (MSA1000) systems

Software

- Oracle9i Real Application Clusters (Oracle9i RAC) software
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux AS 2.1 operating system
- AutoTradeCenter application software

HP Services

- One-call support for products from HP, Oracle, and Red Hat

Contact information

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features, with Advanced Memory Protection. In the DL580 this technology allows redundant memory configurations, hot-replacement of failed memory, and hot-addition of increased memory footprints. The four ProLiant DL580 G2 servers provided ATC with a robust hardware deployment on which to build.

To streamline this configuration, HP developed the ProLiant Parallel Database Cluster (PDC), which is created specifically for Oracle9i RAC on Red Hat Linux. It consists of a cluster of ProLiant servers and an HP StorageWorks Modular SAN Array 1000 (MSA1000) system. Before purchasing the solution, ATC compared the MSA1000 with the Dell CX200 storage system, manufactured by EMC. The cost differences were substantial.

"The HP StorageWorks MSA1000 system was less than half the price of the EMC-Dell solution, which allowed us to buy two SAN systems — one for our test environment and one for our production environment," says Borbolla. "This helped us achieve our service-level targets for a reasonable price — a goal we could not have realized with the Dell server/storage solution."

According to Borbolla, the ProLiant PDC is less expensive than comparable UNIX® systems — but every bit as reliable — making it an ideal solution for business-critical applications. To keep the solution in peak condition, HP Services offers single-call support for all hardware and software issues, whether they concern HP, Oracle, or Red Hat products.

"The HP ProLiant Parallel Database Cluster solution is a great example of how HP delivers adaptive infrastructure technologies," Borbolla says. "It gives us the flexibility we need to grow our business quickly, yet stay nimble. Oracle9i RAC makes it easy to add more servers to the cluster so we can support escalating demands from our customers, and the HP infrastructure allows us to scale the entire e-commerce infrastructure to handle as many transactions as we need. With our HP-Oracle solution, we can sign up new customers and have them selling cars the same day."

Reving up for success

Borbolla praises HP for its extensive knowledge of Oracle and Linux. "HP accurately predicted the impact of Oracle's new clustered database capabilities, particularly

in conjunction with the Linux operating system, and developed a very strong expertise in both areas," he says. "HP delivered a complete, turnkey solution that was not available from other companies. As a result, we are positioned as a leader in our market and have the strong foundation to continue building on that lead."

With the help of the new HP solution, AutoTradeCenter customers can sell their vehicles online in just four to five



days — a process that used to take 30 to 35 days offline. That's a huge productivity boost. "It all comes down to a very attractive ROI proposition," says Borbolla. "Customers pay us by the transaction, and our whole business is predicated on speed and availability. By maintaining an extremely reliable site based on HP solutions, we established an impeccable reputation with our Fortune 500 customers. We've seen a marked increase in revenue due to our robust HP e-commerce platform, and we're solidifying our reputation as a technology leader. Our customers are impressed with the dramatic savings we offer them."

For more information on how working with HP can benefit you, contact your local HP service representative, or visit us through the Internet at our World Wide Web address: www.hp.com.

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