

SUCCESS STORY

Canada Web Hosting

CHALLENGE

For Canada Web Hosting, buying and configuring white-box servers on an as-needed basis could not deliver the efficiencies and scalability necessary to support the company's rapid growth

SOLUTION

More than 700 Dell™ servers, including PowerEdge™ and PowerEdge SC; over 35 Dell PowerConnect™ Gigabit Ethernet* switches for LAN switching; and storage solutions based on both Dell PowerVault™ tape libraries and Dell/EMC storage area network arrays

BENEFIT

Dell products and services help Canada Web Hosting achieve reliable standardization and scalability it needs for its expanding data center operations; Dell Premier Pages™ streamlines product purchasing and support

The Host with the Most

Canada Web Hosting counts on Dell products and services to help drive its success in the highly complex and competitive world of managed hosting

Thanks in part to Dell, Canada Web Hosting (CWH), a company of 10 employees just a year and a half ago, is now a company of 50 employees and is listed by *PROFIT Magazine* as one of the fastest-growing companies in Canada in 2006. CWH specializes in high-value managed hosting solutions for mission-critical applications through a comprehensive, customer-focused consulting and support model combined with robust network and data center services. Currently, CWH is on target for another year of 250 percent growth.

“Managed hosting is a complex business and very difficult to do well,” says Kelly Beardmore, chief technology officer with CWH. “To succeed you need to have strong partners. When we first approached Dell, other vendors showed no interest in us. Dell was the only one who really put in that extra effort to look at our business model, recognize our growth potential, and come to the table with not only financial services but the aggressive pricing and support services necessary for us to compete and grow much more effectively.”



White-box approach couldn't support growth

Before coming to Dell, CWH was buying and configuring white boxes on an as-needed basis. As a result, the company couldn't find the efficiencies and scalability to grow rapidly. While CWH didn't have a big order to begin with, Dell saw the potential of the company's hosting model and was aggressive from the start. With Dell as a partner, CWH found the standardization and scalability it needed in its data center operations.

"They were originally building their own servers from the ground up and were running into some obvious challenges that very quickly got them out of their core business," says Ryan Lee, account executive with Dell Canada. CWH is a unique business, he adds, in that its server requirements are much larger than other companies its size. Rather than make a one-time purchase of many servers, it buys servers continuously as the company adds new clients to its customer base.

Dell servers help enable efficiency and standardization—and cost-savings

Before teaming up with Dell, CWH couldn't build boxes fast enough to meet its requirements, so the company liked the fact that Dell was able to turn out new servers within a two-week period.¹ "When they get new customers and bring them onboard to host their Web sites, CWH needs to move really quickly," says Lee. "We're able to meet that need with the delivery time frames we have in place."

"Using the white-box 'build-as-they-come' model is difficult because you really can't get the standardization you need over the long term," says Beardmore. "You're basically at the whim of whatever your supplier has that month, and then you end up reengineering everything yourself, which is extremely difficult. With Dell you have much more standardized solution, and for us, that meant much longer change cycles between models." Moreover, Dell informs CWH ahead of time about product timelines and which models will change. As a result, CWH has been able to scale its data centers in Toronto and Vancouver much more effectively. With standardization, data center managers can plan power and rack utilization much farther in advance. Servers are ordered, shipped directly to the data centers, and moved into prewired racks for immediate use.

Because of the consistency in Dell's hardware, CWH typically is able to hot-rack solutions well in advance. "Where it can take most of our competition weeks to get a complex multiserver solution on the rack, we can often have it pre-racked, and our technical account teams can immediately start the configuration and testing phases for a new implementation," Beardmore explains, "so that's a competitive advantage for us."

"The consistency, the reliability, the scalability—we wouldn't have been able to do it on our own. The operational efficiencies and standardization that going with Dell has created over our white-box solution have been just a huge advantage."

—Kelly Beardmore
Chief Technology Officer
Canada Web Hosting

"We've shifted our emphasis to enterprise-class hosting over the last year and a half, and we didn't do this to reduce costs," continues Beardmore. However, in the end, going with Dell turned out to deliver a lower overall total cost of ownership than using white-box servers. "With Dell, we've had a radical change in the quality of service we're able to provide compared to the white boxes in terms of our own internal operations and how we were doing things," he says. "The consistency, the reliability, the scalability—we wouldn't have been able to do it on our own. The operational efficiencies and standardization that going with Dell has created over our white-box solution have been just a huge advantage. We know well in advance when there's going to be a hardware change, and we don't have to reengineer anything, so there's a lot of saved effort on how rapidly we can deploy into the rack. As an added bonus, the Dell server models are well known, so clients quickly understand what they're getting for their money." CWH now has more than 35 Dell PowerConnect Gigabit Ethernet* switches, which it uses for LAN switching, and over 700 Dell servers, including PowerEdge, and PowerEdge SC. Additionally, they use Dell storage solutions based on both PowerVault tape libraries and Dell/EMC SAN arrays.

Dell Premier Pages streamline purchasing and support

While cost savings are important to CWH, Dell's quick delivery and turnaround time have solidified the relationship. By using the Dell Premier PagesSM service, the company is able to streamline its business even further, with easy ordering and quick quote turnaround. In the past, senior management did all the ordering, but now the

data center manager can order as needed to keep inventory up, which has reduced time to delivery.

Dell Premier Pages is a tool created for customers to handle all phases of Dell product ownership: purchasing, management, and support. CWH has a personalized Premier Page on the Dell Web site that includes a customized online store where it can configure systems and get prenegotiated prices, so the company knows instantly what the system will cost. Options are preapproved by the company, and management reports are available that provide detailed information on purchase history, including invoice number, purchase price, and type of system.

“When CWH quotes on a large order or a server outside of its standard offering, the company needs to quickly turn Dell quotes around for its prospective customers,” says Lee. “Premier Pages allows the buyers to go online whenever they need a quote. They don’t have to engage a sales rep to get that quote because we’ve laid it all out for them, so their turnaround time is decreased.”

HOW IT WORKS

HARDWARE

- Dell™ servers, including PowerEdge™, and PowerEdge SC
- Dell PowerConnect™ Gigabit Ethernet² switches
- Dell PowerVault™ tape libraries
- Dell/EMC SAN arrays

SERVICES

- Dell Premier PagesSM

On the Premier Pages site, CWH can purchase PowerEdge SC1425, 1850, 2850, and 6850 models as needed; and of course, models and pricing are updated over time.

Dell helps get servers into production faster, for better quality of service

Another service Dell offers CWH is the option to install CWH’s custom server images at Dell’s Custom Factory Integration facility. Taking advantage of this service helps CWH get its servers

into production more quickly and efficiently. Servers are delivered straight to their pre-wired racks, plugged in, and powered on, and are immediately ready for their technical account managers to log on, verify the setup, and hand over to their customers.

“It all comes down to the quality of service,” says Beardmore. “That’s a very broad concept, but Dell has delivered specific things that created operational efficiencies for us and help us offer a better quality of service overall to our customers, and that gives us an edge over our competitors.”

**GET MORE OUT OF YOUR
SCALABLE ENTERPRISE.**



Visit www.dell.com for more information.

¹Results not typical

²This term does not connote an actual operating speed of 1 Gbps. For high-speed transmission, connection to a Gigabit Ethernet server and network infrastructure is required.

November 2006
Printed in the U.S.A.

Dell cannot be responsible for errors in typography or photography. Dell, the Dell logo, PowerConnect, PowerEdge, and Premier Pages are trademarks or servicemarks of Dell Inc. Other trademarks and trade names may be used in this document to refer to either the entities claiming the marks and names or their products. Dell disclaims any proprietary interest in the marks and names of others.

© 2006 Dell Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner whatsoever without the written permission of Dell is strictly forbidden.