success story

3M brings its systems home with HP Outsourcing

“Throughout the years, HP has provided outstanding support, consistently meeting our needs and maintaining our availability. We selected the company for outsourcing because we know from experience that HP will be a leader in IT for a long time to come. Our partnership offers the peace of mind that goes with having quality systems, services and support. That kind of security in the ever-changing IT world is invaluable.”

John Carroll, Manager, IT Continuous Availability and Quality Assurance, 3M
Creating innovative products and services that respond to customer needs has always been a way of life at 3M. For nearly a century, 3M’s culture has fostered creativity and given employees the freedom to take risks and try new ideas. This culture has led to a steady stream of products – from Scotch Tape to Post-it Notes. With no boundaries to imagination and no barriers to cooperation, one good idea swiftly leads to another. So far there have been more than 50,000 innovative products that help make the world a better place to live in.

3M was founded in 1902 at the Lake Superior town of Two Harbors, Minnesota. Five businessmen agreed to mine a mineral deposit for grinding-wheel abrasives. Years of struggle ensued until the company could master quality production and a supply chain, and in 1910 3M moved to St. Paul.

A lot has happened since 1910. The growing importance of technology in business has made 3M a clear leader in information technology. 3M technology platforms are core elements of 3M innovation and springboards to meeting customer needs. In countless combinations, 3M technologies come together as core elements of innovative new products, making them simple to use, yet complex enough to help make the world smarter, healthier and safer.

Consolidation raises issues

During the 1980s and ‘90s 3M developed and deployed a range of applications using HP e3000 Servers. These computers were widely distributed among over 40 plants across the nation and are used for product manufacturing, shipping of orders and inventory management.

In the mid-90’s IT leadership decided to begin consolidating HP e3000 servers. As consolidation plans got underway,

“We began re-deploying our HP e3000 technical staff with the idea that we were going to eventually be converting applications to Microsoft Windows® NT and UNIX®,” explained John Carroll, 3M Manager, IT Continuous Availability and Quality Assurance. “As our staff diminished, we started running into support problems. These problems were due to the fact that we had consolidated about 40% of the plants into the main data center, which created a hefty workload.”

With 21 plants left to consolidate, staff shortages caused 3M leaders to call a halt to consolidations.

Outsourcing proves best solution

In 1998, 3M found a way to resolve its staffing issues. The decision was made to outsource the management of 3M’s HP e3000 systems. After assessing several potential vendors, 3M decided upon HP. “We decided to go with HP because of our long history and satisfaction with the company, and because we had such an extensive HP environment already in place,” Carroll stated.

In June of 2000, HP began remote management of 3M’s eleven HP e3000 systems. These systems reside at 3M’s main data center in St. Paul, and support approximately 50 sites with 24x7 management and monitoring.

“HP does not make judgements that will affect 3M business without formally consulting 3M first,” Carroll attested.
“In other words, HP will not take a system down at a particular time or do a change of any kind unless it is coordinated through a specific contact at 3M. It’s a true partnership that ensures the interests of 3M are considered at all times.”

Continued satisfaction
Carroll commented that 3M’s positive experience with outsourcing on the HP e3000 side has prompted the company to consider having other systems outsourced to HP. “Outsourcing has relieved a number of staffing issues and has provided us a guaranteed level of support,” he explained. “It goes beyond support in the form of availability. HP gets in there and helps us resolve issues, offering customized solutions to meet our specific needs.”

He concluded, “Throughout the years, HP has provided outstanding support, consistently meeting our needs and maintaining our availability. We selected the company for outsourcing because we know from experience that HP will be a leader in IT for a long time to come. Our partnership offers the peace of mind that goes with having quality systems, services and support. That kind of security in the ever-changing IT world is invaluable.”

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