



//Richardson Eyres design and integrate cost effective storage area network for Molton Brown

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Molton Brown is a well-known brand of luxuriously packaged beauty products. The company was founded in 1973 on South Molton Street in London and began life as a hair salon. The company's philosophy has always been to create natural products and its first hair and beauty products were hand-mixed at the salon. By the 1980s the salon had evolved into the Molton Brown emporium and soon the company was supplying its products to top-end stores, airlines and hotels in cities around the world.

Today, Molton Brown operates on a much larger scale from its headquarters in Hertfordshire and has sixty shops in the UK and twenty overseas. The brand continues to sell its products in stores such as House of Fraser and Selfridges and the product range has grown significantly to include day spas, hair and skin products, fragrances, candles and men's grooming products.

As a growing organisation, Molton Brown needs a scalable and resilient IT infrastructure to support its core business systems. When its existing Storage Area Network (SAN) came to the end of its life cycle and was no longer supportable, Molton Brown decided to look for a new, cost effective solution that was easy to set up and configure, but which was also able to support its virtualised environment.

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A winning combination

Molton Brown was open minded during the tender process and considered a range of solutions from the main storage vendors. At the time of the tender, HP had just acquired LeftHand Networks, and data consolidation specialists, Richardson Eyres worked with HP on a tender to recommend an HP LeftHand SAN.

“As the LeftHand SAN was a relatively new technology for HP, it submitted a tender in conjunction with their trusted partner, Richardson Eyres. The recommended solution met our budget requirements and a mix of the functionality offered by the LeftHand SAN and the level of expertise offered by Richardson Eyres was a winning combination for us,” said Navtej Bains, senior systems administrator, Molton Brown.

HP LeftHand SANs are a powerful storage solution that scales performance along with capacity. They have a distributed clustered architecture which enables enhanced data availability compared to traditional SAN technology.

Molton Brown has recently invested quite heavily in VMware and it was essential that the new SAN infrastructure could support VMotion, an advanced feature of VMware that enables running virtual machines to be moved from one physical server to another without impacting the end user. By offloading the storage away from the server hardware (onto the LeftHand SAN), Molton Brown has additional resilience via automatic failover of the solution in case of hardware failures.

HP LeftHand SANs are optimised for virtual environments, so can support VMotion and provide resilience and redundancy data storage so single points of failure are minimised.



Increased capacity

In addition to VMware, the HP LeftHand SANs support Molton Brown's other primary applications including Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft SQL Server. Another key benefit of the HP LeftHand SAN is that it aids disaster recovery as its Snapshots feature allows Molton Brown to take point-in-time Snapshots of its key servers, making restores fast and simple.

"We can now take Snapshots throughout the day and restore a server in minutes. Now in the event of a disaster, rather than losing a whole day's work, we're just going to lose an hour.

"Another key benefit to the business is that we've been able to introduce email archiving and that's as a direct result of having the capacity to do so on the SAN," explained Navtej Bains.

Richardson Eyres rolled out the HP LeftHand SAN across Molton Brown's data centre in London and its HQ in Elsenham, Hertfordshire in just three days with two days for training. It provided end-to-end integration and design of the SAN and also training for VMware. All downtime was scheduled for outside of Molton Brown's core business hours, so there was minimal impact on services in the UK with only a small amount of downtime for Molton Brown sites based overseas.

“Richardson Eyres made the whole deployment process pain free and delivered within our required timeframe and budget. In the past we have used many third party partners to support our IT and I consider Richardson Eyres to be one of the better partners we have used. I can't say enough good things about them.”

Richardson Eyres provides business critical support for Molton Brown's hardware so if there is a drive failure they will be replaced within four hours of reporting the problem. Molton Brown also has business critical support for its software due to the amount of key business data stored on the SAN.

Molton Brown is very satisfied with the results of the deployment and commenting on the rollout, Navtej Bains said:

"The HP LeftHand SAN has significantly increased our storage capacity and scalability and provided us with a robust network. The fact that it works so seamlessly with VMware is a huge benefit.

"From an end user perspective, they will have noticed that network performance has significantly improved as applications are running faster now that the network is running so efficiently. This is made possible thanks to VMotion. If the server starts to struggle, it'll just move to another box that is not being utilised so much.

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In fact, so impressed with the support received from Richardson Eyres, Molton Brown is planning to work with the data centre consolidation experts again in the future when it upgrades from VMware 3.5 to VMware vSphere.

Challenge

- A scalable and resilient IT infrastructure was required to support Molton Brown's core business systems
- It was looking for a new cost effective SAN that could provide increased storage capacity
- The new SAN also needed to support VMware

Solution

- Molton Brown needed a partner who could design, integrate and provide training for VMware. It chose Richardson Eyres
- Richardson Eyres deployed an HP LeftHand SAN
- HP LeftHand SANs are optimised for virtual environments

Results

- Significantly increased storage capacity and scalability
- Enhanced network performance
- HP LeftHand SANs provide resilience and redundancy storage so single points of failure are minimised
- Its Snapshots feature enables minimal downtime in the event of a disaster
- Molton Brown has been able to introduce email archiving due to increased storage capacity
- Richardson Eyres provides business critical support for both hardware and software

// Richardson Eyres provides solutions for data centre consolidation. It works with its customers to streamline IT infrastructures, freeing up time, resources and ultimately saving its customers' money.

Richardson Eyres develops long-term and mutually beneficial relationships working with its customers to ensure that it provides bespoke solutions to help their business run efficiently, effectively and above all, profitably.

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It has partnerships with HP and VMware, and is one of a small number of HP Professional Services Partners (PSP) in the UK. It also provides solutions for companies globally, from their offices in the UK and the US.

With over 20 years experience as a data centre consultant, Richardson Eyres has extensive technical knowledge and the know-how to apply this knowledge to help organisations run their IT infrastructures more efficiently. Established in 1986, the company is privately owned and its headquarters is in Chesham, Buckinghamshire.
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