

Nominee: Mavin Global supporting The Weetabix Food Company

Nomination title: Weetabix SAN Refresh

Weetabix has been a staple brand hugely recognised within the UK market for over eight decades. Today it is the UK's number one selling, most trusted and most recognised cereal, with value sales of over £150million. The business is growing at 5% year-on-year, with performance supported by its other leading cereal brands including Weetabix On The Go, Ready Brek, Alpen & Oatibix.

The FMCG sector is highly competitive and Weetabix recognise the need to adapt and innovate in order to maintain their market leading status. In 2015, The Weetabix Food Company undertook a Project to introduce a new ERP platform, moving from several disparate IT applications to a fully integrated Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP solution.

The new platform, which launched in November 2016, provides Weetabix with a far more cohesive system allowing for more streamlined and automated manufacturing processes, reducing costs associated with ingredient wastage for example, and improving the entire process from inbound packaging and raw materials into production through to packaging, distribution and invoicing. Furthermore, through the tighter integration of business processes, The Weetabix Food Company is now able to interrogate the data to a much deeper level to identify trends, highlight potential issues and act upon them far more proactively.

From day one it was recognised that a major IT refresh was required in order to support the Dynamics AX2012R3 platform. The current systems were not fit for purpose, being based upon last generation technology nearing end of life and support. Following an extensive exercise to review the leading vendor technologies, the choice was made to implement a converged infrastructure based on HP Enterprise Technology. Given the greater reliance upon the Server and Storage Infrastructure an active / active High Availability solution was developed with two identical systems. In the event of a primary systems failure, the secondary system is able to take on the primary role with little to no disruption.

The core solution is based on BL460 Blade Servers & StoreServ 7200 3PAR Storage Arrays, with 3 layers of disk (SSD, SAS & NL) to provide optimal performance as required. Each system holds a total of 42TB capacity meeting both immediate and future scalability requirements based on data growth predictions.

Since Weetabix operates a 24x7 production facility with no windows of opportunity to close down production and switch platforms, a well-defined and tightly controlled project plan was required to allow the new HP system to be installed in parallel to the previous legacy solutions. Extensive testing and adjustments were put in place to ensure the switch over of platforms went smoothly and without disruption.

Following the implementation of HPE technology and Dynamics AX, The Weetabix Food Company has realised numerous benefits, including operational performance improvement. Users have noted a vast improvement in both access to data and applications as a direct result of the data storage optimization provided within the 3PAR solution.

The new Advanced Materials control process has allowed full lot traceability for each pallet within the system, reducing the level of manual and paper recording and increasing the efficiency of operations.

In addition, stock consumption processes within the plant have been enhanced allowing more streamlined stock consumption within the production process. There is also a better understanding of stock available and those due for delivery.

The new technology has helped people to become more efficient too. The system now clearly articulates the role of each function within the organisation, so there is full transparency and an even greater appreciation of the role each person plays within the business.

Why nominee should win

- Weetabix has undertaken a massive technology leap through the adoption of the HPE Technology, after spotting an opportunity to significantly increase integrated processes
- The system was implemented incredibly rapidly – it took just 22 months from recognising the opportunity to having the new system in place and “live” in production
- This is a great example of an organisation (Weetabix) working with leading vendor technologies and truly optimizing them in order to introduce a fit for purpose solution optimised for performance, stability, scalability and high availability/business continuity
- Whilst Weetabix is a leading brand, its IT department is smaller than within some organisations and fully deserves recognition in the user community for taking on such a large scale, highly critical project where the risk of failure would have had a massive impact on the company’s performance (both reputational and financial)