Monterrey, Mexico, based Grupo Comercial Control, SA, (Grupo Control) operates 64 stores and 2 restaurant chains. In order to provide better service to customers and address increased competition, the company decided to update its storage and data management systems. They chose an HDS solution, which included Hitachi Unified Storage VM, Hitachi Dynamic Provisioning, Hitachi Dynamic Tiering and Hitachi ShadowImage Replication, plus consulting and training services. As a result, Grupo Control improved processes by 50% to 70% and energy savings by 30%.

Grupo Control originated 50 years ago in the port of Tampico, Tamaulipas, as La Casa Blanca, an establishment where wedding dresses were tailored and fabrics were sold. It began before the concept of department stores was prevalent Mexico.

Today, Grupo Control is based in Monterrey, Mexico. It manages Del Sol stores and Woolworth Mexicana, as well as restaurants, including the Noreste Grill. “In order to provide better service to customers and face increased competition, we decided to update our storage and data management systems,” said Javier Ricardo García González, CIO of Grupo Control.

Challenge
The main challenge of Grupo Control was to increase the overall performance for the new SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse (BW) and SAP BusinessObjects (BO) modules, plus the increasing workload of virtual machines. Other key challenges included keeping and guaranteeing data availability, without compromising performance; avoiding bottlenecks; and keeping data in the right disk tier to deliver required IOPS for each application.

To get an idea of the number of transactions Grupo Control carries out, consider that about 50 million bills are printed at all Grupo ControlBrings Data Under Control With Hitachi Unified Storage VM Based Solution

Grupo Comercial Control, SA

INDUSTRY
Retail

SOLUTION
Virtualization, Green Solutions, Storage Management

HARDWARE
Hitachi Unified Storage VM

SOFTWARE
Hitachi Dynamic Tiering, Hitachi Dynamic Provisioning, Hitachi ShadowImage Replication, Hitachi Dynamic Link Manager

SERVICES
Consulting and training, equipment delivery and installation provided by Hitachi Data Systems and Network 1

Benefits at a Glance
- Improvement of processes by 20%.
- Energy savings of 30%.
- Reduced carbon footprint.
- 100% data availability.

“Among the aspects that made the Hitachi Data Systems proposal prevail were quality of service and innovative technology. For example, it provided the ability to virtualize even 3rd parties’ storage and ensure 100% availability during migration. In other words, the systems did not suffer any downtime.”

Javier Ricardo García González
CIO
Grupo Control
SUCCESS STORY

points of sale annually. In addition, Grupo Control already had a database environment with SAP and virtualized servers, and required new virtual machines that guaranteed high performance and availability. At the same time, they needed a solution that was flexible to add new capacity while maintaining copy-based data protection.

Thus, the strategic tasks Grupo Control wanted to address included:

- Support the growth of data, especially structured data, such as databases.
- Improve performance of the current infrastructure.
- Ensure the availability of data migrating to the new platform without any downtime.
- Ensure the security of the information.

To optimize the operations, the 1st step was to analyze them in detail. Grupo Control needed to determine how to get more value out of the company's information and increase corporate profitability. The company looked at several vendors, including EMC and Oracle. Hitachi Data Systems was selected for its ability to provide solutions for enterprises that need to ensure their data is available and protected, and, simultaneously, to get the best out of their information.

Prior to selecting HDS for this solution, Grupo Control was familiar with Hitachi quality. The company previously worked with Hitachi Universal Storage Platform VM (USP VM), so when it required an upgrade of the technology infrastructure, HDS was contacted for a proposal.

“Among the aspects that made the Hitachi Data Systems proposal prevail were quality of service and innovative technology. For example, it provided the ability to virtualize even 3rd parties’ storage and ensure 100% availability during migration. In other words, the systems did not suffer any downtime,” said González.

Solution

Overall, Hitachi Data Systems proposed a solution including HUS VM, Hitachi Dynamic Provisioning (HDP), Hitachi Dynamic Tiering (HDT) and Hitachi ShadowImage Replication. HDS would also provide consulting and training services, along with Network 1. The latter components are crucial for Grupo Control to achieve its main business objective: “increase profitability,” recalled González.

Grupo Control chose to run all its core business applications on HUS VM with both 15K and 10K RPM serial-attached SCSI drives, and offering over 30,000 IOPS to the applications. The solution supports the SAP landscape as well as the critical SAP BW and SAP BO modules, which require significant read performance from the storage infrastructure.

The greater throughput available from HUS VM could support the predicted 25% increase in Grupo Control’s virtual environment. Its virtual machines would support its Web and other environments. The company used Hitachi Dynamic Link Manager (HDLM), which offers multipathing benefits, to prevent possible bottlenecks. Hitachi included connectors that improved the performance and management of the virtual environment.

This new infrastructure allowed Grupo Control to reallocate existing assets to testing and development environments as well as data backup. HUS VM architecture is based on enterprise storage systems, so the company benefits from such features as cache memory up to 256GB and virtualized growth up to 3.5PB. “These features are like features of more sophisticated equipment that suit the needs of any business, and the system is also scalable, with an unbeatable cost-benefit ratio,” said González.

HUS VM also has the architectural capability to support multiple media types, including different disk speeds, capacities and flash capacity. Hitachi Dynamic Tiering allows data to automatically move over the different types of installed media to find the best price-performance to match what is required by the application. All of this automated performance management can be managed and monitored from a single console.

In other words, transactional or frequently accessed data is stored on a high-speed disk like a solid-state drive. Nontransactional data is placed on a slower disk, which is performed dynamically and automatically.
That distribution means that constantly used data is moved to a high-speed disk, and if it stops being read, it is moved to a slow disk using Hitachi Dynamic Tiering software. This approach offers the great advantage of performance in data reading and writing as well as in resource saving, as it is not necessary to have all the storage on high-speed disks.

**Benefits**

As an entry-enterprise storage system, the HUS VM provides outstanding unified storage, data availability and migration benefits. Among other exceptional qualities, it also stands out in the field of energy. It requires less air conditioning due to the proprietary innovative technologies of Hitachi, Ltd. It reduces the carbon footprint, while simultaneously providing higher performance and decreasing the costs of energy and refrigeration by 30%.

HUS VM enhances the value of the company’s storage because it reduces costs by 50% by storing data in a shared capacity pool that is managed centrally. It also recaptures up to 65% of nonused existing storage capacity and allows the purchase of new equipment to be delayed. HUS VM updates the technology and system nondisruptively.

In terms of time savings, Grupo Control saved between 60% and 80% of recovery time and time collecting SAP data throughout their establishments. With the previous equipment, Hitachi USP, gathering data used to take between 4 and 5 hours. Currently, it takes between 1 and 2 hours. The company’s SAP performance increased by approximately 50%. And, while the previous equipment used to provide 10,000 IOPS, now HUS VM provides 21,000 IOPS.

It is also important to highlight the fact that HUS VM improves customer experience, allowing Grupo Control to offer high-quality services. This helps to boost the relationships with clients as it supports better experiences and 100% data availability. Finally, HUS VM also helps companies reduce by 50% the time they require to allocate new resources to new services, through simplified, automatized and integrated management tools. “Also, add these benefits up with the advantages of space that the system requires by square meter, which can reach as high as 3.6PB in 2 complete racks. Competitors need 4 or 5 racks,” explained Mexico County Director for Hitachi Data Systems, Alejo Lopez-Crozet.

Overall, the integrated Hitachi solution of storage and data management enabled an improvement in the company’s processes from 50% to 70%, plus energy savings of 30%.

Solution implementation took only 5 days and included the equipment delivery, installation, disk formatting and necessary connections. As for data migration, the Grupo Control was able to execute it easily. “After all, Hitachi Data Systems solution is tailored to our needs,” explained González.