Servium

CASE STUDY

BARDEN

30% faster infrastructure re-build has huge bearing on independence success

Recently acquired, The Barden Corporation needed to work quickly to build a brand-new IT infrastructure that would enable them to operate independently. With all of their core systems still hosted by their previous parent company, this would be no easy task, and required expert guidance, resource, and an agile approach to get them the best possible outcome within a very tight deadline.

The customer

Specialists in the design and manufacture of super precision ball bearings, world leader The Barden Corporation boasts an impressive 70-year heritage supplying state-of-the-art products for demanding environments. Barden's bearing solutions are critical to medical systems, vacuum technology, and aerospace applications.

Considerations

- Acquisition required independent IT operation
- IT functions still controlled by previous European parent
- Tight deadline to decommission systems and start from scratch
- Limited in-house IT resource available

The challenge

Formerly part of a German industrial supplier, Plymouth-based The Barden Corporation was due to be closed as part of their previous parent's realignment of their UK activities. Following efforts to find an alternative solution, the plant was acquired by precision bearing manufacturer HQW Precision GmbH.

"The acquisition presented immediate challenges for us, the most important of which was that we weren't yet equipped to operate as an independent business," Tom Parsonage, Barden's Group IT Manager explains.

"Although we had some on-premises infrastructure, many of our critical IT functions were still being controlled by our former parent. Because these core systems were so heavily reliant on the German Head Office's datacentre, we essentially needed to build up a brand-new infrastructure from scratch in order to truly achieve IT independence."

In the throes of the acquisition Barden worked to a 6-month deadline to retire their existing off-site systems and ensure the necessary on-premises infrastructure was in place to allow their IT to fully return to the UK. This would involve orchestrating the repatriation of the business' entire data archive from Germany to host and secure at the Plymouth site. For an IT team of only four people, this seemed like a monumental undertaking, particularly in such a short space of time. The new infrastructure would therefore need to be easily managed and highly intelligent, reducing unnecessary burdens on the team and ensuring they had the right tools to take back control.

The solution

Initially keen to make as much use of their legacy Dell equipment as possible to reduce costs, Barden wanted to identify whether any of this technology was still fit-for-purpose. They didn't think twice about who was best positioned to help them gain their independence, and immediately contacted their partner Servium.

Calling upon the expertise available through their Services Ecosystem, Servium conducted a full investigation into the plausibility of harnessing any existing kit and orchestrated a series of in-depth workshops to establish where any gaps existed within the current infrastructure. It transpired that Barden needed to replace more than originally anticipated and buying new hardware would actually work out to be more cost-effective in the long run.

This in mind, Servium were quick to suggest Nutanix's hyperconverged solution. Having already seen huge

success in deploying this for another big customer, Servium knew it would be a good fit for Barden's needs. The modular appliances offered by Nutanix would give them their own compute, storage, and hypervisor for the very first time, as well as virtualising all of the business' 40+ physical servers onto a much smaller hardware footprint.

The requirement for Barden's core infrastructure didn't stop at storage and compute either; they needed a new wireless network too. Much like their case for the legacy Dell technology, Barden had originally considered reconfiguring their existing Cisco-based network solution. However, Servium advised that HPE Aruba should be considered, which upon review worked out to be more cost-effective and easier for the IT team to manage.

One of the biggest changes the new infrastructure made way for was tapping into the public cloud.

"In our pursuit of independence, we concluded it only made sense for us to take a closer look at and take advantage of the benefits of cloud," Parsonage admits. "Where

we had been previously unable to utilise the cloud to its full potential due to the security posture of our parent company, we knew exploring it further could open up new opportunities for our business."

Opting for a hybrid cloud solution, Servium engaged with vendor All 4 One to ensure Barden's on-premises and cloud infrastructures would work seamlessly together.

The Plymouth site's new infrastructure implemented, Barden next engaged Servium to extend the new HPE Aruba network to their second site. Servium deployed and configured wireless access points as well as a full SD-WAN solution, ensuring the warehouse reported straight back into the main plant

and all client devices worked exactly as if they were in the office.

"Servium were instrumental at every stage of the project. As well as building and configuring the Nutanix solution ready for deployment, they project-managed the swift migration of all our critical data from the German site to Plymouth, including from one server we thought we'd already lost. They also assumed control of the supply of HP client devices to our UK site, taking this responsibility back from Germany to ensure our access wasn't restricted by the acquisition."

Highlights

- Nutanix hyperconverged solution consolidated compute and storage
- New HPE Aruba wireless network deployed to streamline management
- Benefits of hybrid cloud realised for the first time
- All critical data migrated from German site to Plymouth plant

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Outcomes

- Project delivered 30% faster than plan and under budget
- Streamlined, simplified management of IT estate
- Newfound access to apps and tools via hybrid cloud solution
- Physical footprint, power consumption, and IT overhead reduced
- Proactive on-demand support offers peace of mind

The result

Within 6 months, The Barden Corporation was operating independently. Delivered well within timescales and under budget, the new infrastructure has helped Barden realise substantial cost savings, a much smaller footprint, and flexibility like never before.

"The Nutanix hyperconverged solution completely blew us away. I was initially quite sceptical about the consolidation it makes possible, and thought there was no way you could scale forty physical servers down to just one, but not only did it manage it, it's handled everything we've thrown at it."

In addition to colossal space savings, scalability for future growth, and greatly reduced power consumption, implementing Nutanix has given Barden a free hypervisor in the form of Acropolis. With their existing VMware hypervisor subscription still

controlled by their parent company, replicating this at the Plymouth site would have meant purchasing new licenses – a large cost avoided by investing in Nutanix.

What's more, by decommissioning Barden's legacy Dell equipment via their Technology Asset Disposal Service, Servium helped them realise its residual value, which was then utilised to further relieve some of the costs associated with the new Nutanix hardware.

In switching their network to HPE Aruba, Barden now also enjoys the ease of device management and a streamlined, consistent experience across their entire business. Operating as a hybrid cloud, too, has provided the team with greater freedoms.

"Our cloud solution is probably the thing I'm most thrilled by," Parsonage affirms. *"It's proven absolutely invaluable to my team, allowing us to begin using essential collaboration tools and key applications anywhere in the world, at any time. We are now securing these services using our new network security solution from Fortinet and the embedded security measures offered by Microsoft."*

Importantly, Barden's IT team is now entirely self-sufficient, courtesy of expert-led training and a skills handover accessed through Servium's Services Ecosystem. Moreover, Monitoring as a Service, Backup as a Service, and on-demand support contracts now offer Barden improved resiliency, rapid response, and constant peace of mind.

> " *Servium has always proven itself to be an incredibly efficient and very knowledgeable partner, and this project was no exception. Their agile approach and access to expert resources meant all of our on-premises infrastructure was ready two months before our deadline! That's why they're now top of our list to support us with our European office.* "

Tom Parsonage, Group IT Manager, The Barden Corporation