

# CASE STUDY



Premier  
Business  
Partner

## AT-A-GLANCE

### Key Challenge

- Modernize existing IBM hardware infrastructure in order to expand storage capabilities, increase flexibility and speed.
- Meet hardware performance and storage demands of planned installation of on-board computers in each of the company's 250 trucks.

### Solution

- Migrate from existing IBM System i server environment to IBM i Edition for BladeCenter

### Key Benefits

- Lower initial cost and TCO for IBM BladeCenter Power Blades as compared to traditional IBM System i server.
- Increased ability to support growth in storage capacity and storage sharing among different server environments.
- Easy installation of additional servers as needed, without requiring additional storage.

## KEY PLAYERS SPOTLIGHT

### Solution Provider: SIA



SIA is an IBM Premier Business Partner that specializes in helping organizations deploy business technology solutions – powered by IBM software and systems – to optimize their business processes, leverage their information & content, enhance intra/inter-organizational collaboration and simplify risk management & compliance. SIA is also the developer of Common Sense™, an ERP application for mid-market businesses across a wide range of industries.

- Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- [www.siaaccess.com](http://www.siaaccess.com)

### Customer: Transport Hervé Lemieux



Transport Hervé Lemieux is a road carrier providing local and long-distance full load hauling, as well as general or specialized transportation and private fleet management services throughout the Greater Montreal area, Quebec, Ontario, Atlantic Canada and the New England region of the US.

- Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- [www.transportlemieux.com](http://www.transportlemieux.com)

*“Once we solidified plans to install on-board computers in all our trucks, SIA recognized that we needed more power and a hardware infrastructure with capabilities that could progress with us into the future. The IBM BladeCenter solution offered all that.”*

Martin Mercier  
Project & Efficiency Coordinator  
Transport Hervé Lemieux Inc.

Providing IT solutions to mid-market businesses often requires an ability to work with one foot firmly planted in the present and the other in the future, meeting current IT needs while simultaneously positioning the customer for success as its business and IT needs grow and evolve. So IBM and one of their Premier Business Partners, SIA Service Information Access Inc. (SIA), did just that.

## “...delivering broad business value...”

SIA, developer of an IBM System i-based ERP solution, Common Sense™, also deploys and architects IBM infrastructures for mid-size businesses in industries ranging from manufacturing and distribution to transportation. SIA approaches this role strategically, says Andy Frankel, the company's Executive for BPM Strategy, with the “big-picture” firmly in mind. “We don't just sell our application or IBM's hardware, software and services, we help businesses leverage these technologies in order to innovate, improve service, reduce costs and manage risks.”



Delivering such broad business value requires SIA to merge its IBM technology expertise with a thorough understanding of the customer's current and long-term business requirements. Transport Hervé Lemieux (Lemieux), a long time SIA customer, stands as a case-in-point.

A Montreal-based local and long-distance road transportation carrier with a fleet of 250 trucks, Lemieux first purchased Common Sense™ and an underlying IBM System i infrastructure in 1996. With no internal IT staff, the company has come to rely on SIA as its de-facto IT department over the years. Under SIA's guidance Lemieux places a premium on keeping its technology environment current, updating its hardware every 3-4 years and keeping pace with each new version of the IBM i operating system.

“We embrace change when it makes sense for the customer,” says Frankel, while pointing out that Lemieux's growth was pushing the performance limits of its existing server - a 4 year-old IBM System i. “In Lemieux's case, within the next year they'll be installing on-board computers in all of their trucks to capture data and feed that data back into the Common Sense™ application. We determined that the infrastructure lacked the necessary capacity to handle the increased storage demands of the Windows-based on-board application. For that reason, and a host of other technical and financial considerations, we saw the IBM BladeCenter solution as the infrastructure most beneficial for them going forward.”

With the lease contract for the existing server set to expire, circumstances aligned for a migration to the IBM i Edition for BladeCenter. Lemieux, after some initial hesitation, also recognized the need for a system that would progress with the company's needs.

“There was never consideration of anything other than an IBM infrastructure, but we did question SIA as to why we should move away from the IBM System i. It wasn't fast, but it did the job and we didn't particularly want to change to an entirely different environment,” says Martin Mercier, Lemieux's project & efficiency coordinator. “But when we looked at what the BladeCenter offered - speed, storage, expandability and flexibility - it was more modern technology and power at a lower cost. The BladeCenter is the right choice for our immediate on-board computer project and our future.”

## “...more cost effective...”

Indeed, leasing a BladeCenter proved to be more cost effective than either of the other two options under consideration - upgrading the existing System i server or leasing a new model of the same server. That this move from the IBM System i to the IBM i Edition for BladeCenter would be the first such migration in Canada was never really an issue for Mercier. “We trust SIA; they know our business and they know our plans. To ensure their success, SIA also acquired the backing of IBM Lab Services to help with the first installation. Proving their self-sufficiency, SIA has since successfully migrated other customers from traditional IBM System i servers to IBM Power Blades running the latest IBM i operating system.

From a technology perspective, SIA's Frankel points to a number of advantages BladeCenter has over traditional server environments. “Lemieux can have an Power Blade supporting the IBM i environment, which is what the Common Sense™ ERP application runs on, and an Intel Blade server supporting their Windows-based on-board computing system side-by-side in a Blade chassis,” he says. “The BladeCenter segregates storage from server, so Lemieux can share storage among these distinct operating environments. They can slide in additional servers without having to add storage. That long-term flexibility is critical moving forward, particularly with all the data that will be flowing from the on-board devices.” By all appearances, this solution is now ready for prime-time.

SIA developed a work-plan allotting 4-6 weeks for full migration, including necessary OS upgrades and the installation and testing of Lemieux's Windows-based applications. The physical BladeCenter installation and the configuration itself only took one week, with the IBM System i server and BladeCenter running parallel due to the 24/7 nature of Lemieux's business and the need to minimize downtime.

## “...gives us more speed...”

Though he knows his company has experienced direct savings since the BladeCenter migration, Mercier hasn't quantified Lemieux's cost reductions beyond the lower monthly lease payment. Indirect savings in areas such as cooling, energy and space demands are important as well, but most significant are the business benefits delivered by the BladeCenter solution. “The BladeCenter solution gives us more speed, more capability and more flexibility,” he says. “We can easily install memory or other complementary applications as we need them and we can move forward with our on-board data capture and integration to our ERP solution. That's so critical to our business and the IBM i Power Blade is an important piece of the total solution.”

For more information about IBM i Edition for BladeCenter, please visit <http://www.ibm.com/systems/power/hardware/blades/ibmi.html>

For more information about SIA, please visit [www.siaaccess.com](http://www.siaaccess.com)