

## IBM® infrastructure readies Australian success story Neumann Group for future growth

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### Overview

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#### ■ **Problem**

*As a thriving business, Neumann's was looking to increase automation across its business operations with the implementation of a new ERP system. Faced with legacy IT infrastructure Neumann's needed to overhaul its IT backbone to support modernisation. Critical to this new era of operations was increased reliability and availability to support mission critical business processes as well as scalability to support future growth.*

#### ■ **Solution**

*Neumann's chose to centralise and standardise its IT infrastructure with IBM® technology. The implementation of a sophisticated ERP application prompted Neumann's to select IBM's Intel based IBM System xTM platform and a storage area network based on IBM System Storage technology.*

#### ■ **Benefits**

*Over 500 computer users across 25 Neumann Group sites now enjoy 100% availability with seamless centralised management.*



#### **About The Neumann Group**

The Neumann Group of Companies is an Australian success story operating in the construction and mining industries. Established by Alfred Neumann in 1948 it remains a privately owned family business with a turnover approaching \$1 billion dollars and employs over 800 people. Although Neumann's commenced operations as a sand mining business, the group is now highly

diversified and now trades within the steel, specialised metals, civil construction, petroleum, quarrying, pre-mixed concrete, mineral sands and land development industries. Headquartered in Currumbin in South East Queensland, Neumann's has 25 sites across Queensland and New South Wales.

### **Implementing a platform for growth**

As a business grows and increases its dependence on technology it's critical to build a reliable and scalable IT infrastructure the business can rely on. Neumann's was at this tipping point – it was about to make a major investment in a new system and it needed to be sure its server and storage environment would be able to take the load. Built up over years of organic growth, Neumann's IT infrastructure consisted of multiple server platforms from a variety of different vendors. Not only this but storage was mostly an afterthought and the business was simply relying on attached storage. It was clear Neumann's needed to overhaul its IT backbone to support a more sophisticated IT environment.

The Neumann Group identified some key objectives for the new IT infrastructure. At its worst the existing environment was only delivering 90% availability and with the introduction of the ERP application this simply wasn't going to be acceptable. It was also recognised that Neumann's needed to centralise and standardise its IT environment in order to simplify management tasks and make future expansion easier. As Ian Elliott, CIO of the Neumann Group, reflected, "We needed to move from a disorganised IT environment to one which could guarantee more reliability and availability."

Storage was also becoming a problem. Data in the business was growing fast and in the more complex areas of the business, particularly the steel division, it was beginning to grow exponentially. Not only this but the existing storage solution was based on attached storage and was becoming increasingly difficult to manage. It was decided to look at a more centralised storage approach which would simplify management and allow for future data growth.

*“Up until 18 months ago we were experiencing significant downtime but since implementation the IBM infrastructure has proven to be very reliable.”*

*– Ian Elliott, CIO, Neumann Group.*

### **Standardising with IBM**

After evaluating a number of technology vendors, Neumann's decided to standardise on IBM server and storage technology to underpin the implementation of the new ERP application. "We knew IBM's xSeries® server could provide the power, scalability and reliability we needed to run our business," said Ian. This server platform was enhanced with a new storage area network based around an IBM TotalStorage® DS4300 storage system. With a physical capacity of more than 33 terabytes Ian was confident the DS4300 solution could offer economical and scalable storage for the company's growing needs.

### **Onwards and Upwards**

Since implementation Neumann's has reaped major business benefits. From 90% availability Neumann's IT infrastructure now delivers 100% availability which represents a dramatic improvement. Ian commented, "Up until 18 months ago we were experiencing significant downtime but since implementation the IBM infrastructure has proven to be very reliable." Not only has the infrastructure provided a reliable foundation for the implementation of the ERP system but it has delivered significant costs savings. "Having a reliable platform has drastically reduced management costs," Ian concluded. "We have now embarked on projects to virtualise our server and storage environments confident that the IBM x Server and SAN hardware is capable of providing the stability and functionality we require".

Neumann's is not only pleased with the performance of the new IT infrastructure, but also enthusiastic about its relationship with IBM. "The people at IBM went out of their way to make sure we were happy," says Ian. "We knew we weren't just getting great technology from IBM, but great support as well - they really stepped up the mark when we needed help."

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*– Ian Elliot, CIO, Neumann Group.*

**For more information**

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