THE BOTTOM LINE
The Oracle Database Appliance is designed to be a simple, affordable, high availability cluster in a box. Nucleus examined the experiences of Oracle Database Appliance customers and found they were able to reduce cost and complexity while increasing administrator productivity and accelerating time to value.

Oracle released the Oracle Database Appliance in September 2011 to bring enterprise-class database performance to small and medium-sized businesses. The Oracle Database Appliance is pre-loaded with Oracle Linux, Oracle Database 11g Enterprise Edition, Oracle Grid Infrastructure with Oracle Clusterware and Oracle Automatic Storage Management, and Oracle Enterprise Manager Database Control.

Nucleus’s initial assessment of the Oracle Database Appliance found companies could typically avoid 30 to 40 percent of the hardware expense that would be needed to build a comparable platform, while accelerating time to value and increasing business flexibility (Nucleus Research m85 - Assessing the Oracle Database Appliance, July 2012). This research note takes a closer look at the specific experiences of Oracle Database Appliance customers currently using the appliance to support business-critical data and transactions.

CUSTOMER PROFILE - MEDISWITCH

Mediswitch is South Africa’s leading electronic healthcare transaction servicing company, processing more than 100 million electronic healthcare transactions a year. Headquartered in Midrand, the company supports nearly 30,000 health care professionals, including all the retail pharmacies in South Africa.

In 2011, Mediswitch’s existing hardware was approaching end of life, so the company began exploring upgrade options. After an extensive analysis, Mediswitch decided to move its transaction platforms to the Oracle Database Appliance, for two main reasons:

- The engineered systems approach would deliver the needed uptime and availability Mediswitch needed.
Mediswitch determined the Oracle Database Appliance would cost significantly less for hardware and software on an initial and ongoing basis than a traditional hardware refresh.

“Even without factoring in the reduced staff requirements, the cost savings were significant. Additionally, we can turn on additional CPUs as we need them without additional hardware cost or disruption.”

- Wayne Botha, IT Manager, Mediswitch

Mediswitch moved to the Oracle Database Appliance and uses Oracle Enterprise Manager to monitor and manage its systems and Oracle GoldenGate to replicate data in real time between its two data centers. It has been able to consolidate the multiple servers it previously used for development and testing onto two Oracle Database Appliance machines. The company has also been able to take advantage of the fact that customer can licenses databases on a subset of CPU cores and add more as needed with limited disruption.

KEY BENEFITS

- Accelerated monthly billing processes by 5 times
- Reduced time to complete upgrades by 80 percent
- Reduced support staff requirements by 60 percent
- Avoided an 80 percent increase in 3-year software and hardware costs
- Increased flexibility for future growth

CUSTOMER PROFILE - INPS

INPS develops, deploys and supports Vision, a flexible suite of clinical software solutions that is used extensively within primary care settings and the wider healthcare environment throughout the UK. INPS is a division of Cegedim, a global technology company specializing in CRM systems, strategic data, IT systems, and interoperability services for the healthcare sector. Like many solution providers, INPS is responsible for delivering high availability for its customers’ Vision applications, but was increasingly challenged to manage the complexity and performance demands of its customers. The company was also concerned that insufficient redundancy and reliance on multiple vendors for support would negatively impact its business if it experienced an outage at the hardware, software, or network layer. It decided to explore standardizing its implementations and, at that point, learned about the Oracle Database Appliance.

The INPS infrastructure team knew that installation, maintenance, and ongoing support were three major contributors to the time spent on supporting its database environment. Because of this, the engineered systems approach appeared to be an attractive option. In its first deployment, INPS found it was able to unpack, rack, connect, and power up the
ODA and run its proprietary build scripts to install its Vision application in approximately three hours, a process that previously took five weeks.

“The ODA not only benefits INPS but also our customers in terms of the time taken to bring a new or improved service online and maintenance downtime. On the few occasions that we have contacted Oracle support, we have always had a swift answer without being referred to either another department or vendor, again bringing benefit to our customer base. With every upgrade our ROI continues to grow.”

- Graeme Hodgens, Senior Infrastructure Engineer, INPS

**KEY BENEFITS**

- Accelerated time to production by 50 times
- Reduced time to complete upgrades by 80 percent
- Increased administrator productivity through reduced management and monitoring time
- Reduced issue resolution time
- Accelerated revenue capture from new customers

**CONCLUSION**

The Oracle Database Appliance reduces both the cost and complexity of reliable, high performance computing. In analyzing the experiences of Oracle customers using the Oracle Database Appliance, Nucleus found they were able to increase availability and performance of critical business computing processes while increasing productivity. Flexibility is also a key part of the Oracle Database Appliance’s value proposition. Because prepackaged solutions can be implemented in a fraction of the time that would be needed for a traditional rack infrastructure, IT teams can respond to business demands more quickly. Additionally, because companies can turn on and license additional computing capacity as they need it, teams are better positioned to support future growth with limited IT intervention or business disruption.