

# MORTGAGE LENDERS' MOMENT OF TRUTH

Optimal Blue anticipates 50% improvement in engine response time, giving mortgage sellers an edge with a high-performance pricing solution powered by Dell



## SOLUTIONS

- BACKUP/RECOVERY/ARCHIVING
- CONSOLIDATION
- POWER & COOLING



optimalblue

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

**COUNTRY:** Plano, TX (USA)

**INDUSTRY:** Technology

**FOUNDED:** 2002

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** 40

**WEB ADDRESS:**

[www.optimalblue.com](http://www.optimalblue.com)

## CHALLENGE

Optimal Blue sought to optimize its technology platform by adopting more power efficient servers and flexible storage.

## SOLUTION

The company upgraded from stand-alone servers with direct attached storage to a Dell™ PowerEdge™ modular blade enclosure, blade servers and a Dell EqualLogic™ PS Series iSCSI SAN array.

## BENEFITS

### GET IT FASTER

- Assembled blade system and SAN storage in 15 minutes with no previous SAN experience

### RUN IT BETTER

- 50% improvement in application response time
- Improved reliability and availability by eliminating single points of failure

### GROW IT SMARTER

- \$1,000 per month savings from 50% reduction in space used for hardware
- \$500 per month savings in power

DELL

The mortgage industry is in a state of crisis, as developments frequently surface on the nightly news. Secondary markets have been disrupted and are often illiquid—and volatility is reflected in the cost of funding.

**“WITH OUR CURRENT SYSTEM, OUR RESPONSE TIME IS THREE TO FIVE SECONDS. WITH THE DELL BLADES AND STORAGE, WE EXPECT TO CUT RESPONSE TIME IN HALF.”**

Ivan Darius, founder and co-CEO, Optimal Blue

Optimal Blue is confronting this turmoil head on by providing accurate information on the pricing and timing of mortgage products. How much should a mortgage cost at any given time? What are the lending rules? These questions have never been more relevant.

“If the pricing on a loan is out of date by a couple of minutes, it’s worthless,” says Dr. Ivan Darius, founder and co-CEO. “In challenging market conditions such as these, when investors’ Web sites are non-responsive and investor guidelines and rate sheets are changing rapidly, our technology and service differentiate us from the rest.”

#### **TECHNOLOGY REDUCES UNCERTAINTY**

Darius and co-founder Larry Huff have created a comprehensive service that provides brokers and lenders with the information they need to sell into the secondary market. The company’s 140 customers purchase the information via a software-as-a-service (SaaS) model.

Optimal Blue needs its IT platform to perform to the highest standards to ensure that the company can provide fast and accurate mortgage market information to customers.

“We wanted to improve reliability at peak times without having to double our hardware,” says Darius. “Also, in our previous storage solution the database servers each had their own Fast SCSI drives. This led to a lot of difficulties with growing databases and the inability to add disk capacity because of chassis and other constraints. Also, the failure rate of the disks we were using was higher than we expected. We wanted a more power-efficient solution which would cost less to cool and occupy less space. It was obvious that a blade system would be the answer.”

To support a new release of the search engine, Darius switched to a Dell PowerEdge M1000e modular blade enclosure housing Dell PowerEdge M600 blade servers with Intel Xeon quad-core processors. He also upgraded from his direct-attached storage to a Dell EqualLogic PS5000XV iSCSI storage array.

#### **MORE POWER PER WATT**

“We saw from published numbers that Dell was a leader in the performance per watt equation with the M1000e offering,” says Darius. “We also like the fact that Dell provides us with tools that enable us to manage the system

#### **HOW IT WORKS**

##### **HARDWARE**

- Dell PowerEdge M1000e modular blade enclosure
- Dell PowerEdge M600 blade servers with Intel® Xeon® quad-core processors
- Dell EqualLogic PS5000XV iSCSI SAN array
- Dell Chassis Management Controller
- Integrated Dell Remote Access Controller

# “IT TOOK LESS THAN 15 MINUTES TO GET THE DELL POWEREDGE BLADES AND THE DELL EQUALLOGIC STORAGE SET UP. THE FACT THAT WE COULD DO THIS WITHOUT HELP IN SUCH LITTLE TIME WAS REMARKABLE.”

Ivan Darius, founder and co-CEO, Optimal Blue

remotely. We are using the Dell Chassis Management Controller, the Integrated Dell Remote Access Controller and the Dell EqualLogic Group Manager to manage the SAN.”

Darius plans to virtualize the servers to achieve maximum use of the blades and keep down power demands and space consumption. “We will turn all these blades into a virtual computer,” he says. “With management tools such as VMware and a good SAN, we can be a lot more flexible.”

The choice of the Dell EqualLogic iSCSI SAN array was key to the plan. As Optimal Blue’s customer base grew, the process of migrating existing systems to new and larger servers was painful without scalable, flexible storage.

Darius did his due diligence and considered the alternatives. “We were looking for a more reliable and expandable storage mechanism,” he says. “We found that EqualLogic gives us more redundancy, not only at the disk level, but also at the server level. We can have multiple servers in a backup mode to run certain databases if we need them. With RAID 50 storage, we also increase our reliability by a significant factor. And the EqualLogic SAN is inherently stackable; if you need another one, you just add it into your switch network.”

## FAST AND FLEXIBLE SETUP

With the flexibility and power of the Dell EqualLogic SAN and the Dell PowerEdge M1000e blade system, Darius feared the set up process would be laborious, but he was in for a pleasant surprise.

“We put the whole system together—the blades and the Dell EqualLogic storage—in a minimal amount of time,” he says. “It took less than 15 minutes to get the Dell PowerEdge blades and the Dell EqualLogic storage set up. We are specialists, but we are not SAN specialists, and the fact that we could do this without help in such little time was remarkable.”

With the built in storage virtualization capabilities and advanced automation of the Dell EqualLogic PS Series, Optimal Blue will be able to seamlessly expand its SAN without any disruption of service.

## 50% SAVINGS IN SERVER SPACE

Optimal Blue’s previous server solution had filled four cabinets, and Darius was close to renting more space. Once again, he was pleasantly surprised. “With the Dell blades and storage, we’ll need one and a half cabinets—about 50 percent less space—which saves \$1,000 per month,” he says. “In addition, we’re also saving \$500 per month on power so we’re benefiting from a greener

and more cost-friendly solution. We’re going green as a company, and the Dell solution is helping us take that step.”

## CUTTING RESPONSE TIME IN HALF

Optimal Blue is expecting a dramatic reduction in the response time of its search engine.

“With our current system, our response time is three to five seconds,” Darius says. “With the Dell blades and storage, we expect to cut response time in half.” Reducing the response time is a benefit to customers because it makes their workflows faster and more productive.

“We support about 40,000 searches a day, and at any given time we have between 1,500 and 3,000 users logged in. However, we have 35,000 licensed users, so there’s a potential for much higher usage,” Darius says.

## BUILDING RELIABILITY INTO THE FUTURE

By eliminating stand-alone servers with direct-attached storage, Optimal Blue will eliminate single points of failure, a key cause of potential downtime.

Even though the company is still in the process of implementing the Dell solution, it is already planning to further enhance stability and reliability. Darius intends to purchase another Dell

EqualLogic SAN and put it in a backup site for a hot disaster recovery solution.

“Having a failover solution will give us a lot of assurance as we grow and add customers,” says Darius. “It’s an important step for the future, and we trust the Dell EqualLogic iSCSI solution and our production Dell blades to do the job.”

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