

Dell pays off for PaymentOne

A leading provider of online payment services leverages its collaborative relationship with Dell to deploy a scalable, reliable infrastructure



PAYMENTONE

» **CHALLENGE** Deploy highly scalable architecture to handle rapid growth in transaction volume; ensure fault-tolerant system to avoid unplanned downtime for Internet-based clients; choose hardware vendor that can collaborate closely and offer knowledgeable guidance

» **SOLUTION** Work closely with Dell™ Professional Services and the account team to deploy a scalable Dell cluster with no single point of failure; install several Dell PowerEdge™ 1750, 2650, and 6650 nodes running Microsoft® SQL Server™ software; provide ample storage using a Dell/EMC FC4500 Fibre Channel storage array

» **BENEFIT** Ability to expand easily as the company grows using a scalable cluster; redundant architecture to help provide uninterrupted service to clients; smooth management of rapid expansion with the help of Dell expertise and support

Customer Spotlight

High broadband adoption rates and the 24/7 availability of Internet shopping have helped turn e-commerce into a burgeoning business. Online commerce is growing at an incredible rate; unfortunately, online fraud is also approaching all-time highs: The Federal Trade Commission received more than half a million consumer complaints (516,740) during calendar year 2003, up from 404,000 in 2002.¹ Understandably, many consumers are somewhat or extremely concerned about transacting online. Potential customers can become frustrated by inconvenient payment processes, and many abandon their transactions prior to completion—especially when asked for a credit card number or other guarded personal financial information.

These issues create a critical challenge for online merchants and service providers. To grow revenues and increase profitability, e-companies must offer secure and convenient payment options. PaymentOne—a single-source provider of online payment services and strategies—helps online merchants capture additional revenue by addressing consumer concerns and providing payment alternatives. PaymentOne supplies a global suite of

convenient, unique, and virtually fraud-free payment solutions, including “no credit card required” and traditional payment options, fraud control, risk management, and commerce management services.

To provide these services, the PaymentOne data center processes millions of transactions per month in real time. With e-commerce continuing to expand rapidly—and more Internet-based providers turning to PaymentOne for services—the company sought to proactively equip its IT infrastructure for a continued, rapid rise in transaction volumes.

Scalable Dell architecture provides power and reliability

Carl Bralts, director of network engineering and computer operations for PaymentOne, began evaluating hardware vendors with two main considerations in mind: scalability and reliability. To plan for anticipated growth, PaymentOne needed a highly



scalable architecture that could solve short-term growth needs and lay a solid foundation for future expansion. An extremely fault-tolerant system was also a must. Online merchants lose both money and customers when systems go down. By deploying a system with built-in redundancy, PaymentOne could help ensure uninterrupted service to its clients in the event of a component failure.

After evaluating many suppliers, PaymentOne chose Dell to outfit its expanding data center. Working closely with the Dell sales account executive, Bralts and his IT staff decided that a cluster of high-performance Dell servers would provide excellent availability and performance—and an easy path for growth. IT staff at PaymentOne worked together with Dell account and services teams to come up with a design, architecture, sizing, and implementation strategy.

In November 2002, Dell Professional

Services and PaymentOne deployed Dell PowerEdge 6650 servers in an application cluster running Microsoft SQL Server. A Dell/EMC FC4500 Fibre Channel storage array provided ample storage for the cluster. Designed with no single point of failure, the cluster greatly reduced the risk of unplanned downtime.

“After we implemented the Dell cluster and Dell/EMC storage, we began to dramatically scale our processing volumes,” says Ted Sergott, CIO and vice president of engineering at PaymentOne. “We experienced no lost connectivity or performance interruptions. I attribute this directly to the power and redundancy of the Dell architecture and the seamless integration of the components and software into our infrastructure.”

Dell supplies high level of service and expertise to PaymentOne

Although best-of-breed technology was a top requirement, Bralts’ choice of Dell was also driven by another objective. He envisioned a hardware vendor that could become a strategic technology partner to PaymentOne—a company that his staff could depend on for a high level of service and expertise. Having worked with Dell previously in his career led Bralts to believe that the company could provide the close collaboration that PaymentOne sought.

“Dell always came through for me in the past because they have such a strong dedication to customer service,” Bralts says. “By selecting Dell, PaymentOne not only made the right choice in equipment but also found a strong business partner.”


Working with Dell, PaymentOne has broken through the normal constraints of vendor, partner, and customer definitions. Together, the two companies have developed best practices that are also useful to other Dell customers today.

“We invest a great deal of energy into making our clients successful, and they tell us that we set a standard by which they measure others,” says PaymentOne President and CEO Joe Lynam. “I saw a lot of the same qualities in the Dell team. Their strong expertise, experience, and philosophy of working closely with us matched well with our own approach.”

Strong relationship with Dell facilitates high growth at PaymentOne

Although the Dell cluster represented a significant undertaking for PaymentOne, the company’s decision to put in place the necessary infrastructure for massive growth is already paying off. In 2003, the company was ranked 39 on Deloitte and Touche’s Fastest Growing Technology 500 List for North America.

PaymentOne executives acknowledge that Dell has contributed greatly to the company’s ability to smoothly manage this rapid expansion. Since the initial deployment, the company has added more Dell equipment to its data center and put into place a technology road map that prominently features additional Dell hardware. PaymentOne is now properly equipped to capitalize on the huge, ongoing e-commerce boom thanks to its scalable, reliable Dell infrastructure—and the strong relationship between the two companies.

“I can buy technology anywhere, but not the relationship,” Bralts says. “Dell is committed to learning about our business so that they can supply us with the wisdom and products that will optimize our growth. I foresee a long and prosperous partnership for both sides.” 

¹ <http://www.consumer.gov/sentinel/pubs/Top10Fraud2003.pdf>