

COLUMBIA SPORTSWEAR ENERGIZES BUSINESS AGILITY WITH VXBLOCK

Brand-name apparel manufacturer improves performance of critical SAP ERP applications while streamlining product development



Apparel

United States

columbia.com

Business needs

Columbia's aging enterprise resource planning (ERP) infrastructure could no longer keep up with growth of its business, which is expected to nearly triple from \$1.7 billion in revenue to \$5 billion in the coming years. The company's supply chain process was no longer efficient and its infrastructure had become complex and difficult to support.

Solutions at a glance

- Dell EMC Vblock System
- Full suite of SAP applications

Business results

- System scalability enabled IT to support many more SAP environments than originally planned in the rollout.
- Reduced DevOps time resulted in accelerated new business initiatives, such as product designs and production plans.
- Rapid deployment and ease of use enabled IT staff to find new ways to solve business problems and bring value to the company.
- Revamped processes dramatically altered the way work was done and enabled the business to operate faster.

99%

less time spent provisioning



87%

increase in performance



A leading designer and manufacturer of active outdoor apparel, footwear, accessories, and equipment, Columbia Sportswear Company serves a global market with 3,200 employees and offices in 45 countries.

Columbia's aging enterprise resource planning (ERP) infrastructure could no longer keep up with growth of its business, which is expected to nearly triple from \$1.7 billion in revenue to \$5 billion in the coming years. The company's supply-chain process was no longer efficient and its infrastructure had become complex and difficult to support.

To meet its long-term growth objectives, Columbia overhauled its ERP environment and consolidated operations on Vxblock Systems, boosting performance and scalability while improving efficiency and simplifying administration. According to Michael Leeper, senior manager, IT Engineering, "Columbia Sportswear trusts the Vxblock Systems with running what are the crown jewels of this company. They are up to the task and we are confident that they will support our continued success."

The challenge

Columbia's legacy Oracle JD Edwards ERP environment ran on RISC-based IBM iSeries servers, which were costly to operate and lacked scalability. The physical infrastructure also required months to deploy new environments, which stalled getting new design ideas into development and production.

In addition, supporting Columbia's separate storage, networking, and compute environments was tedious, often requiring many hours negotiating among various vendors before a problem could be resolved.

Dell EMC Vblock System provides flexibility and ease of management

After evaluating the risk versus return of transition, Columbia decided on a converged infrastructure deployment model leveraging Vxblock Systems from Dell EMC for its new SAP Business All-in-One for Consumer Products ERP, specialized for apparel and footwear companies. Key factors in the decision included the advantages of a pre-configured design, flexibility, ease of management, and single point of contact of the Vxblock Systems compared to a build-your-own or reference architecture approach from IBM and NetApp.

Columbia relies on its 100 percent virtualized Vxblock Systems to run the full suite of SAP Business All-in-One for Consumer Products modules. These control and monitor its entire supply chain, from procuring raw materials and managing cross-plant production to delivering finished styles and streamlining order processing.

Columbia also leverages the Vxblock Systems for SAP Business Warehouse, Supplier Resource Management, and Business Planning Consolidation, as well as its development and load testing environments.

In addition to its production-dedicated Vxblock System in Denver, Colorado, Columbia Sportswear Company has a second Vxblock System used for test and development, as well as disaster recovery, 1,200 miles away in Portland, Oregon.

As part of the Vxblock System environment, Columbia uses Dell EMC RecoverPoint remote data protection to replicate between the two sites, and Dell EMC Data Domain deduplication storage systems for backup. Columbia is eagerly awaiting support from Dell EMC for running active/active data centers between Portland and Denver, leveraging Dell EMC vPLEX technologies.

"Columbia Sportswear trusts the Vblock systems with running what are the crown jewels of this company"

Michael Leeper

Senior Manager, IT Engineering, Columbia Sportswear

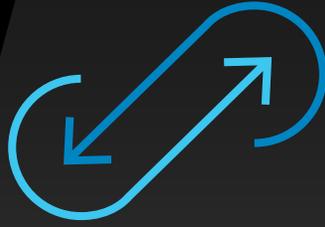
DevOps provisioning in

hours

rather than weeks



ONE
vendor, one call



With Vblock systems, Columbia Sportswear gained agility, resilience and efficiency for running SAP, the most important set of applications in the company.

Columbia highly values Dell EMC universal, single-call support. Not only does Columbia IT no longer need to play “traffic cop” among different vendors, but they work seamlessly with Dell EMC support professionals, so valuable time is focused on addressing the issue right from the outset.

Transforming IT pays off in greater efficiencies

With Vxblock Systems, Columbia Sportswear gained agility, resilience, and efficiency for running SAP, the most important set of applications in the company. The many benefits resulting from this solution include

- System scalability enabled IT to support many more SAP environments than originally planned in the rollout.
- Columbia was able to revamp existing processes dramatically altering how the way work is done and enabling the business to operate faster.
- Rapid deployment and ease of use enabled Columbia to redirect IT staff to find new ways to solve business problems and bring value to the company.
- The Vxblock system cut provisioning times for DevOps from 6 weeks to 2 hours resulting in accelerated new business initiatives, such as product designs and production plans.

With the agility of Vxblock Systems and intelligence provided by Dell EMC management tools, Columbia Sportswear is transforming IT to be much more service-oriented in fulfilling business requests. Instead of asking business users to estimate their resource requirements, Columbia IT now relies on its Vxblock Systems to deliver resources as needed. It’s allowing IT to “never say no” with an infrastructure that can handle nearly any project that comes through the door.



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