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Continuity in Computing

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Hamworthy Combustion Virtualizes MicroVAX 3100

When it comes to burning things up, Hamworthy Combustion leads the field. From laboratory research to industrial incineration, Hamworthy can provide just the right burner. When it came time to ensure the continuity of an important ERP system, Hamworthy needed legacy hardware expertise. They turned to Migration Specialties for a solution.

Hamworthy maintained a legacy MicroVAX 3100 running OpenVMS to support a set of ERP applications. IT audits had identified the system as high risk due to the age of the underlying hardware. The MicroVAX 3100 was introduced in 1987 and VAX production was discontinued in 1999. The software supported by the system was perfectly adequate for the task at hand so the ideal solution would be a hardware upgrade with no software impact. But how to achieve this on a 20-year-old system?



Migration Specialties provided the solution with an onsite port of the MicroVAX 3100 to a SimH virtual VAX. The system was ported to a customer-supplied VMware virtual server running Windows Server 2003 R2 in three days. This solution provided brand new hardware without impacting the ERP application or its users.

Starting with a bare bones virtual VAX configuration, the client data was backed up across the network. This was the slowest part of the operation, requiring 14 hours to pull over 40GB of data across the MicroVAX's 10Mbit Ethernet connection. As each disk backup completed, it was promptly restored to virtual disk drives on the virtual VAX system. Once all of the data was restored, the virtual VAX configuration was matched to the legacy VAX hardware and the system booted without issue.

Migration Specialties stood by as Hamworthy spent a day running user-driven acceptance tests against the virtual VAX. These tests included extended user queries and intensive reporting, such as monthly and annual reports. Report results were compared to the legacy VAX system to ensure accurate data transfer. By the end of the day, the system was pronounced a success and placed into production. The MicroVAX 3100 was shut down and disconnected from the network.

In three days, Migration Specialties replaced 20-year-old hardware with a brand new virtual system that integrates neatly into a modern VMware virtual environment. This was accomplished with no impact to the end users and minimal impact to IT operations. Total cost for the project was £6,500. Migration Specialties' virtual solutions provide the means to quickly and cost effectively upgrade legacy systems.

Migration Specialties offers legacy hardware virtualization solutions for Alpha, VAX, PDP-11, and HP1000 systems. Visit the [Migration Specialties Virtual Systems page](#) for additional information.