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product review

Caudwell
Communications
Makes Better,
Quicker Business
Decisions with
Netezza

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Caudwell Communications Makes Better, Quicker Business Decisions with Netezza

REVIEWER: Joseph Macken, director of IT for Caudwell Communications.

BACKGROUND: Caudwell Communications is the fixed-line telephony business of the Caudwell Group, the UK's fifth largest privately owned company and the parent of well-known brands such as Phones4U and 2020 Logistics. Caudwell supplies data and voice calling services to the business and residential marketplace within the UK.

PLATFORMS: We are utilizing two Netezza Performance Server (NPS) 8100 systems for production, development and disaster recovery.

PROBLEM SOLVED: In order to remain competitive in the fiercely fragmented UK telecommunications market, we needed to make better, quicker business decisions. To this end, we recognized that we could exploit an asset that most of our competitors were neglecting: call data records (CDRs). Enter the Netezza Performance Server (NPS) system, which allows us to quickly and affordably analyze the mountains of CDRs stored in our data warehouse. With the NPS system, we can now rate CDRs more effectively and in seconds instead of tens of minutes. Our decision to select the NPS system has had a dramatic payoff for us, leading to more nimble decision making at several levels. We are so pleased with the system that we have assigned a dedicated team of 10 analysts to use it for business intelligence purposes. The team runs queries on the NPS system all day, every day and is thrilled with its impressive speed. The NPS system is known to be at least 10 to 50 times better than similar products from IBM, Oracle and Teradata.

PRODUCT FUNCTIONALITY: By architecturally integrating database, server and storage within a single system, the NPS system manages fast data loads and provides real-time insights that help us make the decisions that drive key business processes. As a result, we have remained ahead of the competition and have increased productivity across our entire organization. The NPS system handles the kinds of queries that we were unable to run before, such as which customers are calling other customers. Analyses that once took days, or were not possible at all, now take just minutes.

STRENGTHS: As newcomers to enterprise-wide data queries, we required not only lightning-fast analysis, but also ease of use. Fortunately, the NPS system is a self-contained, single-rack that features a "load and go" implementation process, taking just hours - not weeks. Additionally, there is no need for intensive database administration and system management. In addition, the NPS system offers a dramatically lower total cost of ownership than other, more widely known systems, enabling us to leverage a robust, enterprise-wide data warehouse. As an additional benefit, the NPS system has allowed us to reduce the manual aspects of reporting and analysis, freeing IT and data analysis staff to focus on more strategic projects, subsequently leading to a higher return on investment.

WEAKNESSES: We were accustomed to using Microsoft Data Transformation Services to load data. After purchasing the NPS system, we needed to move to more robust commercial ETL tools to load data at the rate the NPS system can sustain.

SELECTION CRITERIA: We needed a system with



Netezza Performance Server System

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real speed and affordable pricing. Our executives witnessed a Netezza demo featuring a very large, complicated query that was performed in just minutes. We were extremely impressed. And when we saw the price tag, which was half of what similar - yet much slower - systems from vendors such as IBM or Teradata would have cost, it was obvious we had found our solution. The initial machine proved so popular that we purchased a second NPS system solely for our development users, allowing them to segregate development and test functions from production tasks.

DELIVERABLES: The NPS system allows us to comb through customer data records and provide reports on customer usage and rate plans in order to make faster, smarter business decisions. We run approximately 1,000 queries per day.

VENDOR SUPPORT: Netezza provides an excellent support system that has enabled us to put the NPS system into production use very quickly. Best of all, the NPS system requires very little ongoing management - allowing our data warehouse team to handle other tasks.

DOCUMENTATION: Netezza provided all the necessary documentation required to allow us to install and successfully run the NPS system.