



A Flourishing Future for FloraHolland

The Netezza Performance Server® appliance delivers business-critical data at record speeds

With six locations, 36 auction clocks and more than 4,000 employees, FloraHolland is the world-leading trader of plants, flowers and horticultural products. On a daily basis, FloraHolland processes approximately 180,000 commercial transactions involving some 7,000 suppliers and 4,500 buyers. Looking in on an auction in the Naaldwijk location in Holland at any given moment, you're bound to see one of the 2,000 flower carts that roll across the auction floor every day. In order to monitor and perform against the service level agreements which are critical to ensuring ongoing business success, each cart is tracked by means of a bar code and a radio frequency identification (RFID) system.

All commercial and logistical data taken from the RFID system is immediately loaded into a data warehouse, from which FloraHolland runs a large number of algorithms to quickly analyze the information in a number of different ways. The system performs analyses on the lead time of flower carts, delivery times, efficiency of employees and overall error margins. Product information such as color, stalk length, quality and price is also reviewed. In addition, a series of 'what if' analyses are important to growers and buyers, who reference the data to determine their own market positions. They perform benchmarks with respect to the total price, their region or on the country level. Perhaps most critically, they also perform data reviews on which products sell well and which don't in order to ensure optimal assortment and maximum revenues.

Hans Uithol, corporate information officer at FloraHolland explained, "We are a marketplace for growers and buyers and need to support them accordingly. We capture commercial and logistical data in our data warehouse from which customers can then find information on quality, money, deliveries and cost development on a central intranet. It is critical that we maintain a high level of processing speed in order to keep a competitive edge."

Challenges for the Data Warehouse

Even as data volumes grew, FloraHolland wanted to provide growers and buyers with more information, placing increased pressure on the existing data warehouse. The number of concurrent users was also on the rise, and the emphasis shifted from standard queries towards more complex, ad hoc queries. As a result, performance of the data warehouse declined noticeably.

The company also wanted to use RFID technology to continuously follow every flower cart, as each year carts were disappearing from the stock lists. With each cart costing €600 (~\$870), the ongoing replacement of carts was proving to be a very expensive drain on the business. The auction house believed that the use of RFID could provide substantial savings every year, although the amount of data to manage would rise exponentially and tuning the system to handle this increase would become more time-consuming and expensive. Meanwhile, FloraHolland's business also needed to find a solution that would provide scalability to support future developments more effectively.

Research showed that an upgrade of the existing data warehouse would not only be very costly, but that many alternative solutions were also expensive to manage or were unpredictable with regard to scalability. Another obstacle to replacing the existing system was that the alternatives offered poor connectivity to the existing business software solutions used within FloraHolland: Informatica PowerCenter for ETL and Business Objects for reporting and analysis.

CUSTOMER: FloraHolland

NETEZZA SYSTEM: NPS 5200 + NPS 5200-TestDR

APPLICATION:

- Commercial and logistical analyses using RFID

BENEFITS WITH THE NPS SYSTEM:

- Unprecedented performance while supporting 50 concurrent users
- 30x faster query performance on average
- Fast, simple migration from previous environment
- Database indexes, aggregations and partitions eliminated
- Low total cost of ownership; significant savings in ongoing IT investments
- Linear scalability without sacrificing performance

"The Netezza Performance Server is a dream solution for us. It helps us exactly where we need it to – in the heart of our data warehouse."

*Hans Uithol
Corporate Information Officer
FloraHolland*



Introducing the Netezza Performance Server System

With vast experience in business intelligence solutions, Inergy, an IT partner of FloraHolland's, introduced the company to the Netezza Performance Server (NPS®) system – a streaming analytic™ appliance with unprecedented performance, scalability and overall low management requirements. The system runs on a unique combination of hardware, operating systems and databases, processing – in parallel – large amounts of data 10 to 100 times faster than traditional solutions, at a much lower cost of ownership.

To demonstrate what the NPS system could deliver, Inergy carried out a successful proof of concept, meeting the very high processing and query targets set by FloraHolland. Not only did the NPS system pass the difficult challenge of processing more than 500 million commercial transactions that had taken place over the last five years, but it also delivered significant improvements with respect to querying data and, on average, returned queries 26 times faster than the previous system. Some queries ran up to 200 times faster!

Netezza's data loading speed was also extremely fast, and extracts completed 30 times faster. One of FloraHolland's most business-critical demands was that the performance levels with 50 concurrent users should be at least equal to the performance of the current data warehouse operating with just one user. Despite this challenge, each of the 50 concurrent queries ran twice as fast on Netezza as a single query could run on the incumbent system. Not only did the POC display in detail the level of functionality within the Netezza system, it also convinced FloraHolland to purchase one. Furthermore, within a short period of time and with very little effort, the migration to the new system was completed.

Uithol stated, "Netezza's claim on speed and performance was exceptional, so much so that we had to see it to believe it. They proved it. It was super-fast and very impressive. This is a huge leap forward in technology."

Faster, and Practically Maintenance-Free

As a result of the successes FloraHolland realized during its proof of concept with Netezza, the company went on to purchase one NPS 5200 and another development system. The performance advantage of FloraHolland's NPS systems have led to a considerable time gain during the analysis of commercial and logistical data. In addition, the appliance packaging of the NPS system makes it practically maintenance free, so internal resources no longer need to dedicate their time to indexing, aggregating and partitioning data. Since purchasing the NPS system, FloraHolland has also reduced its spend on ongoing IT investments such as system management and maintenance.

Overall, FloraHolland is very satisfied with the system. And since the processing engine and storage are housed together on each intelligent storage node (also known as a Snippet Processing Unit, or SPU) within the NPS system, performance and capacity scale linearly together. In other words, as the number of SPUs increases, queries are processed faster while available disk space grows. This means that whenever FloraHolland wants to either expand storage capacity or improve performance, all it needs to do is upgrade to a larger NPS model without incurring high costs or requiring time-consuming effort.

Uithol commented, "We are now fully available, and scalable. Performance is great and our data warehouse finally creates an added value for the user which is a significant development for FloraHolland. The only difference that the user notices is that their queries return faster, so as a result, user satisfaction is very high. The Netezza Performance Server is a dream solution for us. It helps us exactly where we need it to – in the heart of our data warehouse."

About Netezza

Netezza (NYSE Arca: NZ) is the global leader in data warehouse and analytic appliances that dramatically simplify high-performance analytics for business users across the extended enterprise, delivering significant competitive and operational advantage in today's information-intensive marketplaces. The Netezza Performance Server® (NPS®) family of streaming analytic™ appliances brings appliance simplicity to a broad range of complex data warehouse and analytic challenges. Customers who are realizing the benefits of Netezza appliances include Ahold, Amazon.com, CNET Networks, Debenhams, Department of Veterans Affairs, Epsilon, Neiman Marcus, Orange UK, Premier, Inc., Ross Stores, Ryder System, Inc., The Carphone Warehouse and Virgin Media. Based in Framingham, Mass., Netezza has offices in Washington, DC, the United Kingdom and Asia Pacific.

For more information about Netezza, please visit www.netezza.com.

Proof of Concept Demands	Results with Netezza
Reports: 10x Faster	26x Faster
Data Extracts: 5-10x Faster	30x Faster
Performance with 50 Concurrent Users = Performance of Current DW with 1 User	100x Faster
System Stability	✓
Connectivity with Informatica PowerCenter	✓
Simple System Management	✓

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