



Gibbs Parts Keeps Rigs Rolling With MomentumPro On IBM Technology



Overview

■ **The Challenge**

With a business constantly evolving and growing, Gibbs Truck and Trailer Parts (GTTP) found that it needed to keep a comprehensive inventory of items on hand all of the time. The challenge was to keep precisely the right type and number of parts to satisfy a demanding customer base while avoiding excessive capital outlay.

■ **The Solution**

GTTP implemented the latest version of MomentumPro Enterprise, a business software solution specifically designed for supply-chain companies in the mid-market. The software

was ported onto the latest Intel® processor-based IBM @server® xSeries®, one of the new 64 bit-enabled servers which offer enhanced flexibility, easy scalability and increased reliability.

■ **The Benefit**

For GTTP, the choice of server was a no-contest event. For half a decade, high performance IBM server technology backed by fast and efficient technical support had been the foundation of the company's computer system. The enhanced attributes of the IBM xSeries server and the IBM-Markinson relationship further reinforced their decision to stay with IBM technology.

Key Business Benefits

- Rapid installation of the IT business software and infrastructure solution resulted in minimum interruption to commercial operations and systems
- Achieved trouble-free network operations between processing centre and four business outlets
- Enhanced graphical interface offers new on-screen business tools to improve staff productivity
- Tighter integration between business software and Microsoft® Office applications allow for easier exchange of data
- In-built future upgrading and expansion of business solution available with 64-bit enabled system technology

Customer Overview

Of all those to claim the title 'road warrior', few deserve it more than Australia's truck drivers who work long hours and travel even longer distances to ensure customers get their goods on time.

So when things go wrong with their rigs, they have no time to waste on looking for spare parts. They get straight onto the phone and call a company like Gibbs Truck and Trailer Parts (GTTP) in South East Queensland.

With a history that dates back to the late 1950s, GTTP originally opened for business at Arundel on the Gold Coast primarily as a car and truck wrecking yard. In 1980, Chris and his brother Paul Gibbs took over the company as hands-on operators.

In 1990, the Gibbs brothers implemented software from Markinson Business Solutions to manage and streamline GTTP's growing operations, including key stock control and importing activities.

The truck wrecking operation was closed in 1997 to meet the changing needs of customers who wanted new parts with full manufacturer's warranty. The transmission, differential and drive shaft repair operations, which developed from the early truck wrecking days, continued to grow.

In October 2000 GTTP opened a second Gold Coast outlet at Burleigh Heads, complete with a full drive shaft repair shop. At the same time it opened a specialist truck parts outlet at Rocklea followed by a second Brisbane parts unit established at Hemmant in 2005.



The Business Problem

With the constant evolution of the business and ever-growing list of inventory items, by mid-2005 the company decided it needed to upgrade its computer management system. "Our customers are very mobile and don't have time to waste, so when they need spare parts for their trucks or trailers, they need them now or they will go elsewhere," says Gibbs Truck and Trailer Parts Managing Director Chris Gibbs.

"So keeping ahead of our competition is essential for us and managing our inventory of over 10,000 items is an important part of our business. For that we rely heavily on our networked computer system."

From the company's main computer processing site at Arundel, an ADSL broadband network links the four

GTTP outlets. The software which manages the enterprise via this network is MomentumPro Enterprise from Markinson Business Solutions.

MomentumPro is designed to deliver specific competitive advantages to supply-chain companies by administering key business areas such as customer service, inventory, pricing, reordering, warehouse and overall store management.

So in early 2005 when Markinson invited GTTP to preview the latest release of MomentumPro, Gibbs jumped at the chance. "Version 3 of the Enterprise Edition offered us a 100 per cent graphical interface and an ability to exchange data with Microsoft Office, including new features such as tight integration with Excel. So we went ahead and loaded the software onto the existing IBM server which we had used for the past five years," he says.

However, the increased capabilities and graphical content of MomentumPro Enterprise V3 required three times the processing power of the previous version. By the end of the first day, the existing five-year old GTTP server was beginning to choke on the load of data that it was required to process. The plug was pulled on the system and everyone agreed that a more powerful server was the only way out of the problem.

"There are four key elements which help us maintain a competitive advantage in a very competitive market: the partnership between IBM and Markinson to support us and our customers for the long haul, the new IBM @server® xSeries, MomentumPro and our broadband ADSL network, which is all virtually bullet-proof."

Chris Gibbs, Managing Director, Gibbs Truck and Trailer Parts

The IBM Solution

Gibbs immediately contacted the company's IT infrastructure solutions provider, Aus-IT, who assessed the situation and recommended replacement equipment from IBM's new xSeries range of servers. The advantage offered by this 64 bit-enabled server was that it could provide GTTP with all the computing power the new software system required.

IBM's xSeries servers also allow for future growth, which meant the company could scale to support growing data volumes while streamlining operations of their applications in the meantime.

For Chris Gibbs, the decision to go with the new technology took little time to make. "For five years we had been happy with the performance of our existing IBM server and warranty service, so when Aus-IT suggested the new xSeries model we accepted their recommendation," "We placed the order on Friday and within two working days they were installing the new xSeries server."

The existing IBM server, which had already given half a decade of faithful service, was put to work in another of the Gibbs' family enterprises – Nationwide Container Sales Pty Ltd – which sells reconditioned shipping containers to farmers, builders, schools and anyone who needs extra storage space.

The Business Benefits

With the new xSeries server powering the networked system, MomentumPro Enterprise V3 took over the role of running the day- to-day computer-based administration of GTTP. It now helps the company's management maintain the correct level of stock that will serve the needs of a demanding customer base while ensuring that any inventory oversupply is not soaking up excessive amounts of GTTP capital.

"Having the right software reports also means that we can respond quickly to changes in market conditions,"

"This in turn helps us maintain a competitive advantage in a very competitive market. But there are four key elements which come

together to make all of this work for us: the partnership between IBM and Markinson to support us and our customers for the long haul, the new IBM server, MomentumPro and our broadband ADSL network, which is virtually bullet-proof."

For the future, Gibbs believes that the IBM xSeries server will prove to be as reliable and cost-effective as the previous IBM model. Certainly it was designed that way – for hands-off reliability through mainframe-inspired technologies.

The right technology coupled with a half-century of business experience should mean that GTTP will continue to go from strength to strength, as it has done in the past by helping the road warriors to keep on trucking.



"Having the right software reports also means that we can respond quickly to changes in market conditions,"

Chris Gibbs, Managing Director, Gibbs Truck and Trailer Parts

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