



UNLOCKING TELEPHARMACY WITH AN AGILE INFRASTRUCTURE

Enhance patient care and support with HPE solutions
that scale quickly and easily.





Industry

Pharmaceutical

Objective

Support patient care with technology that can adapt to new challenges without sacrificing uptime or performance.

Approach

Use HPE ProLiant servers and HPE Nimble storage to scale out virtual infrastructure.

As the world shifted to remote work, Astrup Drug needed to quickly adapt its independent pharmacies to a software-based telepharmacy model.

By relying on the flexibility of HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen10 servers and HPE Nimble SAN, Astrup Drug was able to make the change without risking mission-critical customer care. Learn how HPE IT solutions for small and mid-sized businesses provide the agility and resilience needed to overcome new challenges.

A LONG HISTORY OF PRIORITIZING CUSTOMER CARE

When Sterling Drug opened in 1952, it was dedicated to serving the community of Austin, Minnesota. As the business expanded into a group of independent pharmacies focused on long-term care, Astrup Drug carried on that tradition of supporting customers' access to prescriptions, no matter the obstacles.

That resilience was evident even in the early days of the company when there was only one pharmacy location. The founder Leonard Astrup would go through great lengths to make sure customers received their prescriptions. There are stories of how Astrup would use a snowmobile to hand-deliver medicine when snowstorms made it difficult for customers to reach the shop.

Over the course of nearly 80 years, Astrup Drug grew to include 24 separate locations across Minnesota and Iowa. The business had to adapt to new challenges, and innovative practices have been essential to maintain their high standards of care. That's why agile and resilient HPE solutions play an important role in growing the business and responding to change.

Shon Olson is responsible for maintaining the company's infrastructure as the network administrator, and makes every technology decision with customers in mind.

"Any amount of downtime for us can mean our customers may not be able to get the medications they need. In extreme cases that can be a life-or-death issue for a customer," said Olson.



Servers Optimized for Scalability

HPE ProLiant DL360 is perfect for a diverse workload with Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors and up to 28 cores.

“We had plenty of resources to allocate for scaling out some of our virtual infrastructure.”

– Shon Olson, network administrator, Astrup Drug.

Unrelenting Performance and Reliability

HPE Nimble storage is agile, always-on, and always-fast with a 99.9999% guaranteed availability.

“We were able to scale out the current virtual infrastructure we had in place without sacrificing performance.”

– Shon Olson, network administrator, Astrup Drug.

ADAPTING TO NEW CHALLENGES IN REMOTE MEDICINE

For Astrup Drug, responding to new customer needs is part of business. So when there was an immediate shift to remote work and social distancing in 2020, they were ready. Throughout the year, the organization introduced a range of new business practices including the adoption of telepharmacy, contactless delivery, and new remote work guidelines.

“As a whole, COVID-19 really changed how we approached remote working. What originally was thought of as ‘can never be done’ was proven to be possible in a certain capacity,” said Olson. “Changing our business model in this fashion will undoubtedly change how we work moving forward long term.”

To respond to the new business model, the 5-person IT team needed to adapt their infrastructure to support new, unexpected solutions. This involved supporting a HIPAA-compliant telepharmacy software that helps pharmacists perform tasks remotely, from medication order review to patient counseling. Even though using a telepharmacy model was not part of their long-term plan, Astrup Drug was able to transition without missing a beat.

“We had plenty of resources to allocate for scaling out some of our virtual infrastructure,” said Olson. “We added a couple of additional virtual servers for remote workers to access the resources they needed. With that we were set to continue business under a new hybrid model of mass remote working.”

SOLUTIONS DEDICATED TO SIMPLICITY AND AGILITY

Astrup Drug was able to quickly scale up the resources it needed to support customers thanks to their portfolio of solutions from HPE. When Shon Olson first started working at the company, the infrastructure consisted of a handful of physical servers and a small virtual environment. He knew there was an opportunity to become more resilient as the company grew, and he worked to phase out physical servers and invest in the company’s virtual infrastructure.

“Over the past 5 years I have utilized the HPE ProLiant line of servers to upgrade and expand our current virtual environment to keep up with the needs of our expanding business,” shared Olson.

Astrup Drug uses VMware® on HPE ProLiant servers to host everything from an Exchange server to remote desktop protocol servers and backups. The company was prepared for long-term growth, but the shift to remote work demanded more resources than they expected. HPE ProLiant was able to provide the ideal foundation for new applications. The software-defined infrastructure optimizes configurations, workload placement, and cost models so it’s easy to respond to changing needs.

“The first priority was manageability. We didn’t know exactly how many people may be working remotely from week to week, so any solution we put into place had to be scalable with minimum notice,” said Olson. “We were able to scale out the current virtual infrastructure we had in place — beyond what we had forecasted our needs to be — without sacrificing performance.”





Intelligent IT Management

HPE InfoSight provides analytics across your virtual environments and uses powerful AI to predict and prevent disruptions.

“HPE InfoSight has proven to be an incredible tool.”

– Shon Olson, network administrator, Astrup Drug.

AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INNOVATORS IN PHARMACY CARE

The next time that Astrup Drug will need to adopt a new business model or innovate to provide better customer care, Olson knows they will be ready. The HPE ProLiant and Nimble solutions gives him the agility to support new virtual machines, enable remote work, and provide innovative new customers service opportunities.

“If we wouldn’t have invested in the HPE ProLiant Gen10 servers to back our virtual infrastructure, we would have been caught short on the power and resources we needed to scale out to keep our business running smoothly,” said Olson.

It wasn’t just the power behind the solutions that made the transition easy. Automation, analytics, and monitoring ensure that managing workloads is simple. HPE Nimble utilizes the predictive intelligence of HPE InfoSight to ensure all workloads are optimized in real time. It makes day-to-day management much simpler because it eliminates time-consuming troubleshooting.

With the benefits of HPE InfoSight, Olson knows that he has a convenient platform that allows him to monitor all of his environments in one place. He utilizes the solution every day. “HPE InfoSight has proven to be an incredible tool for being able to administrate all of our HPE infrastructure,” he shared.



Solutions

- HPE ProLiant DL360 Gen7, Gen9 and Gen10 Servers
- HPE Nimble SAN

IT outcomes

- Flexible resources allowed IT to scale out virtual environments
- Reliable solutions maintained uptime for mission-critical tasks
- Deploying a new software enabled remote operations

Business outcomes

- The company made a successful shift to the new telepharmacy business model
- Pharmacists have expanded capabilities for working remotely
- Long-term customers received continued care without any disruptions

POWER INTO THE FUTURE

As the Astrup IT team plans for the future, they are focused on replacing their limited legacy solutions and making sure their technology is as innovative as their pharmacy practices. Not only is Olson planning to update older HPE ProLiant servers to Gen10, but he also wants to deploy a new storage array like the HPE Nimble dHCI. The team's priority is to make sure that Astrup Drug has the best solutions at hand so they are ready for whatever challenges and opportunities come next.

With the power of HPE Nimble dHCI — HPE's new disaggregated hyper converged infrastructure — Astrup Drug will be able to take agility to the next level. The solution enables independent scaling of compute and storage resources with business-critical speed. New solutions from HPE will help Astrup Drug continue to offer customer-centered care with innovative operations and practices.

HPE makes it easy for organizations like Astrup Drug to accomplish their goals with resilient, agile, and simple solutions. As business moves faster and faster, an intelligent infrastructure enables companies to scale quickly to meet new demands. Open up new opportunities with innovative solutions, and power into the future with HPE.

EXPLORE AGILE HPE SOLUTIONS

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