CASE STUDY

Finning International Inc., World's Largest CAT Dealer, Selects Connectria for iSeries Enterprise Support

Platform
- IBM i

Challenge
- Migration, disaster recovery, managed dev, production, and system performance issues

Solution
- IBM i based ERP solution with customized managed services and disaster recovery

Results
- 24x7 monitoring/support
- Improved Disaster Recovery
- System performance remediation
- Increased ability to make enhancements/improvements

Finning International Inc. (Finning) is the world's largest Caterpillar dealer delivering unrivaled service for over 85 years. They sell, rent, and provide parts and service for equipment and engines to customers in a diverse range of industrial markets, including mining, forestry, construction, pipeline/oil field construction, agriculture, government sector, marine, transportation, fisheries, and the commercial transport industry. Finning manages a world-class network of product support services across Canada including British Columbia, Yukon, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories, and across the globe in the UK and Ireland as well as South America.

For the past several years, Finning has built upon the company's strong foundation with a focus on safety and people. It continues earning customer loyalty by advancing operational priorities of customer and market leadership, service excellence, supply chain optimization, and improved asset utilization. These imperatives remain critical components of its strategic framework, which now also includes an emphasis on innovating in every area of the business. Finning's strategic framework puts the customer at the heart of all they do and provides clear direction company-wide for how they operate their business. Finning contacted Connectria while searching for a managed services provider (MSP) who could support their IBM i and supporting x86 environment. Finning and Connectria have worked together since 2018.

The Challenge

Before coming to Connectria, Finning was limited by available solutions for its aging infrastructure. They encountered issues with upgrades and flexibility, while also looking to scale back their data center footprint. Finning began the search for an MSP that could meet their needs and entertained multiple vendors with IBM i and x86 support expertise.

"What we had previously wasn't really meeting our business demands. From a risk viewpoint, our primary challenge was that what we had in our existing environment was quite old. We constantly tested and tried new scenarios, but it was not until we actually moved everything into production with Connectria that we were 100% sure we would see the performance gains that we were looking for," said Tracey Chemello, Finning Global Director Business Services Delivery, Digital and Information Technology.

Connectria's ability to make changes, internal team skills and talent, as well as flexibility and cost were the main reasons it came out ahead. Connectria was selected as Finning's MSP not only because of its IBM i expertise, but also thanks to its highly respected services and relationships with other CAT dealers. Finning began working with Connectria with an initial focus on a migration, as well as disaster recovery, managed dev, and production.

"I was impressed with the skills of Connectria's team. Initially we were focused on moving away from our previous hosting provider. From a service perspective, we didn't believe we could at first. We wanted to explore opportunities to improve our service. Costs certainly played a role with that. Overall, we were looking to move to a different type of setup – cloud hosting with dynamic options for performance," said Chemello.

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The Solution

Connectria provided Finning an IBM i based enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution. Connectria also has over 100 x86 VMs that directly support Finning's IBM i ERP implementations. In addition to the IBM i and x86 cloud infrastructure, Connectria is providing Finning with customized managed services that include day-to-day monitoring / administration, batch job monitoring and a zero-downtime backup solution. Connectria is also providing Finning a disaster recovery environment in a geographically distant data center. Due to the mission critical nature of the environment and Finning's unique reporting environment, Connectria has implemented a hardware and software-based replication techniques as well as off-site cloud backups.

"Connectria's team supported us in both our testing efforts and our migration as well. Because of the way our stack was previously, we were limited by cores. We were limited by space in the actual racks themselves. We had an issue that plagued us for five years and once we migrated, we found that thanks to the new hardware, the new support structure, and the new overall environment with Connectria, the issue simply resolved itself," said Brad Jensen, Systems Analyst.

As a global supplier for all IBM i workloads, Connectria enabled the continued consolidation of vendors and improvements to Finning's environment from streamlining upgrades and improving flexibility to helping scale down its data center footprint from 14 to two.

The Results

"In the end, we really wanted to ensure that there was no business impact, which we were able to accomplish with the help of Connectria. My favorite thing about working with Connectria has been the ability to work well together," said Chemello.

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Connectria was able to size Finning's business with the hardware it needed to be successful. Additionally, there was a large amount of time spent on the architecture side of things. Finning was able to see improvements, even from a DR perspective, because of the time Connectria's team spent revisiting better approaches than what Finning was previously doing.

"If we hadn't engaged Connectria, I think we would have continued having system performance issues. Those really never stopped until we did the move. We also wouldn't have been able to see the strategy of closing down the data centers because that just would not have been possible without a partnership like we have with Connectria," said Chemello.

"Connectria's network operations center (NOC) is incredible. Rather than our teams having to constantly be pre-emptive, with the NOC we were able to set up monitoring rules and they monitor them on our behalf. If there was an issue or sudden hiccup, they actioned those for us rather than having to call our resources off hours. The 24/7 support and simply knowing that somebody is there monitoring our assets and doing what needs to be done was very reassuring for me. Over the years, that has really minimized a lot of our downtime and also opened up our availability to work on things we just didn't have the bandwidth for before," said Jensen.

With the success of the IBM i and x86 ERP implementation, Connectria is now working with Finning to expand the scope of services that Connectria provides. These services now include DBA support services and the monitoring and alerting on Finning's network devices and circuits worldwide.

About Finning

Since 1933, when Finning was first established in Canada by Earl B. Finning, our name has conveyed integrity, reliability, and resourcefulness. Over the years, the company has grown as a result of a genuine commitment to earning customer loyalty. With our broad product support infrastructure and unmatched service capabilities, we deliver solutions that enable customers to achieve the lowest equipment owning and operating costs while maximizing uptime. Finning employs over 13,000 people worldwide and operates in three geographies, with the head office in Vancouver, Canada.

For more information visit www.finning.com

About Connectria

From Fortune 100 enterprises to medium and small businesses, Connectria provides managed cloud, managed services, and compliant cloud security solutions to more than 1,000 global customers. Working as an extension of each customer's IT team, we deliver technology-agnostic solutions consistently, with depth and breadth of engineering expertise, scalable solutions, and speed to market. Our "No Jerks Allowed®" philosophy includes flexible terms, straight-forward pricing, and custom solutions. With a culture based on integrity and an unwavering employee commitment to treating every customer with a relentless focus on satisfaction, it's easy to do business with Connectria.

Connect with us today

Talk to one of our IT advisors by calling **800.781.7820** or reaching out to us by email: **sales@connectria.com**.