

CASE STUDY

Seamlessly Moving From IBM i V5R4 On-Premise to the Cloud



Challenge

Needed to upgrade an aging IBM i infrastructure while at the same time they were integrating a recently acquired company.

Selection Criteria

Required a provider highly experienced in managing both IBM i environments and multiple other technologies in order to provide a seamless migration to the latest hardware and software related performance improvements.

Result

Now optimized with the latest technology enabling a greater capacity for business recovery and future growth, Dometic experienced significant improvements in performance and response times.

Dometic is a global manufacturing and sales company that provides a variety of products for the mobile living market so they can enjoy life when they're not home. When Dometic's Americas region faced an aging IBM i infrastructure, a discontinued IBM i V5R4 O/S, and the need to integrate a newly acquired company into its IBM i environment, they decided to upgrade and move to an IBM i Cloud.

The Challenge

The Dometic Americas region covers North and South America, including 16 manufacturing and warehouse locations. Each region has a Chief Information Officer who is tasked with implementing global IT strategies in their region.

Greg Tipton is Dometic's CIO for the Americas region. When Greg joined Dometic in 2012, he was confronted with an aging IT infrastructure. All of the region relies upon BPCS software. BPCS (Business Planning and Control System) is an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application designed for the IBM i server running AS/400 operating system.

BPCS is a critical application for the Americas region and the IBM i hardware and operating systems had not been upgraded for several years due to the economic downturn during that time. As a seasonal business, Dometic's BPCS utilization, particularly within the order management system, was resource constrained every summer.



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In addition to an aging legacy IT infrastructure, several other challenges converged, prompting the Americas region to make changes:

- Dometic Americas was acquiring a company half its size and needed to integrate them into their systems and provide significantly more capacity to accommodate them.
- IBM discontinued its support of the AS/400 operating system version used by Dometic (V5R4).
- The Americas had an antiquated business recovery solution which was unworkable.
- The Americas lacked separate development, test and production environments hindering the ability to manage changes.

Dometic knew they had to make changes and pursued a process which presented two different options:

1. Dometic could continue with an on-premise solution, however they would need to procure new hardware, upgrade their V5R4 O/S and come up with an adequate business recovery strategy.
2. Alternatively, Dometic could rely upon a partnered, outsourced solution.

Dometic began its analysis comparing the two alternative approaches. According to Greg Tipton, “We created a business model which compared purchasing the same configuration and running on-premise versus hosting in the cloud, and the payback in the cloud was less than 18 months. As a result, we began to look for credible IBM i Cloud providers.”

The Solution

Having conducted its search for viable IBM i Cloud providers, Dometic narrowed down the field to an incumbent vendor (already providing Dometic with its business recovery solution) and Connectria.

Dometic chose Connectria for a variety of factors, however the primary reason which stood out was Connectria’s knowledge and experience with the IBM i. “Compared to our incumbent vendor, we were most impressed with the people from Connectria,” said Greg Tipton. “From our first interaction and throughout, it was clear to us that Connectria was very knowledgeable. They were responsive to all our inquiries, and even helped us quantify what we needed in support of building our business case to get things going internally. Connectria was patient during the entire process.”



“We created a business model which compared purchasing the same IBM i 7.2 configuration and running on-premise versus hosting in the cloud, and the payback in the cloud was less than 18 months.”

Greg Tipton, CIO Americas

Services:

- IBM i V5R4 Migration
- IBM i Cloud Hosting
- IBM i Managed Services
- IBM i Disaster Recovery

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Dometic upgraded its on-premise, IBM i V5R4 environment to IBM i 7.2 Cloud. Connectria assured Dometic that it could migrate them painlessly and Dometic was impressed at how smoothly things migrated. There were actually three different migration stages where Dometic backed up their entire V5R4 system for restore on fresh 7.2 environments within Connectria:

1. Connectria created one “Hot Site” in its St. Louis data center with a backup site in its Philadelphia data center. Connectria brought up the sites in 7.2 and tested connectivity. Dometic had full access to both data centers since both nodes are in their MPLS network.
2. Connectria restored Dometic’s V5R4 BPCS backup tapes and demonstrated everything would restore and run on 7.2.
3. Connectria brought up the entire system, network, restored BPCS and all other data Dometic needed.

All three phases were implemented seamlessly and Dometic planned a live cutover during the July 4th weekend of 2015.

According to Greg Tipton, “It turned out to be everything we had hoped for. The response of the people at Connectria was phenomenal, as we went through the different phases in building this thing up, any questions we had, any solutions we needed were provided by the folks at Connectria. The expertise they have internally was phenomenal.”

Greg also pointed out, “We went live in the middle of our busy season, so the fact that we were willing to take that risk says a lot about our confidence in Connectria’s ability. Immediately, our customer service group, who were the heavy users of the system during those summer months, experienced a noticeable reduction in response time including the amount of time it took for batch jobs to run as well as the amount of time it took to print. Everything ran significantly faster than it had before.”

“Ongoing, we feel we get a great value for what we’re paying. Everything that Connectria has provided and provides is well worth the money we’ve spent.”

Greg Tipton, CIO Americas

“Our total experience in moving from an on-premise V5R4 system to the IBM i 7.2 Cloud was spectacular. Honestly it could not have gone any better. And the response from our end users was an immediate, noticeable improvement.”

Greg Tipton, CIO Americas



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The Results

Dometic now enjoys an IBM i Cloud with the latest hardware, software and related performance improvement. They also have incorporated its acquisition, allowed for future growth and have a solid business recovery solution. Dometic has realized its intended payback in moving to the Connectria IBM i Cloud and is happy with Connectria's service and value. "Ongoing, we feel we get a great value for what we're paying," noted Greg Tipton. "Everything that Connectria has provided and provides is well worth the money we've spent."

Dometic also got to experience the flexibility and rapid provisioning available with Connectria's IBM i Cloud. Once the company Dometic acquired was integrated, Dometic needed to upgrade capacity. According to Greg Tipton, "I literally remembering calling Connectria on a Tuesday, told them we needed an additional .4 core and 1.5TB disk. Connectria provided paperwork on Wednesday, I signed it and sent it back, and on Saturday they IPL'd our system and everything was available to us. It was the most seamless upgrade I have ever seen in my entire life."

Tipton said the global strategy for Dometic is to own less and less and run more in the cloud.

As for Greg Tipton's advice to other organizations running an unsupported IBM i V5R4 environment who are hesitant to upgrade and migrate to the cloud?

"Forget about the risk of being broken. If you continue with a completely unsupported V5R4 O/S, you are broken. You have to go for it. I can speak to our experience with Connectria, which was seamless."



About Dometic

Dometic is a global market leader in branded solutions for mobile living in the areas of Climate, Hygiene & Sanitation and Food & Beverage. Dometic operates in the Americas, EMEA and Asia Pacific, providing products for use in recreational vehicles, trucks and premium cars, pleasure and workboats, and for a variety of other uses. Their products and solutions enrich people's experiences away from home, whether in a motorhome, caravan, boat or a truck. With 22 manufacturing/assembly sites in nine countries, Dometic products can be found just about everywhere across the globe. Dometic employs approximately 6,500 people worldwide, and is headquartered in Solna, Sweden.

For more information visit dometic.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.

