



Eaton software “virtually” amazing to firm and its customers



Location:

Victoria, B.C.

Segment:

Technology sales

Problem:

The company needed a solution capable of protecting and providing graceful shutdown for its virtualized environment.

Solution:

Eaton® 5PX UPS and Intelligent Power® Software

Results:

The Eaton 5PX, combined with the Intelligent Power Software Suite, delivers not only system uptime, but also control and management of Think Communications' virtual infrastructure.

Background

Since its founding in 2005, Think Communications has strived to provide clients with a single point of contact for all of their technology needs. The company's first order—a lone \$5 cable that was too small for the “Big Guys” but was urgently needed by the customer—underscores Think Communications' commitment to satisfy its clients and build long-term relationships.

From that first \$5 cable, Think Communications grew into a full-service value added reseller (VAR), staffed by a team of sales, administrative and solution architects who possess extensive industry experience and the ability to understand the challenges companies face when looking for business solutions. In June 2010, the firm launched Think Technology Solutions, a professional services division focused on server, storage and desktop virtualization; DR and business continuity solutions; and Cisco® network/voice and data services.

Challenges

Like an ever-growing number of corporations, Think Communications has been enjoying the numerous advantages afforded by operating a virtual environment. However, when it came to managing the system during unexpected power outages, the company's uninterruptible power system (UPS) left personnel scrambling. With three VMware® hosts connected to an APC UPS, Think Communications was not able to navigate any shutdown procedures.

“When we had power outages, nothing was controlled,” reveals Partner/Solutions Architect Tony Woods. “The VMware hosts would shut down without warning.”

So the firm sought a power protection solution that was not only robust enough to protect its virtual environment—in addition to several servers, a storage array, core switching infrastructure, a voice gateway router, a wireless LAN controller and a backup appliance—but could also provide much-needed control and management of its virtual infrastructure.

Explains Woods, *“The APC UPS just couldn't do what we needed it to do.”*

Solution

Luckily for Think Communications, the Eaton 5PX could. The UPS not only delivers powerful protection and an industry-leading efficiency rating of 99 percent, but comes with the Eaton Intelligent Power Software Suite (IPSS).

Compatible with VMware, Microsoft®, Red Hat® and Xen®, IPSS provides all of the tools needed to monitor and manage power devices across the network, even in virtualized environments. The innovative software solution combines the most critical applications to ensure system uptime and data integrity with power monitoring

“After everybody went home, I just pulled the plug on the UPS, and watched the console as things started to shut down. It blew me away. We've got clients dying for this type of technology.”

*Tony Woods,
partner/solutions architect*



Powering Business Worldwide

and management, as well as graceful shutdown during an extended power outage.

"For us, it was all about being able to integrate with our virtual infrastructure," Woods says.

The suite encompasses two software programs—Intelligent Power Manager (IPM) and Intelligent Power Protector (IPP)—which can be downloaded free of charge. IPM supervisory software enables monitoring and management of multiple power and environmental devices across the network from a single interface, even integrating with the vCenter™ dashboard so users can move and control virtual machines during a power failure.

IPP protection software provides graceful, automatic shutdown of network devices during a power issue, saving work-in-progress and preventing data loss.

"We really like Eaton's integration with VMware," emphasizes David Saele, president of Think Communications. Noting that the software solution has been tremendously received by the company's customers, Saele reveals, "It's a game-changer from our perspective, because the competition doesn't offer it. We have a lot of customers frustrated with APC's lack of seamlessness for shutting down a virtualized environment."

Beyond the numerous software benefits, Think Communications is reaping tremendous value from the 3000 VA 5PX UPS, as well. In addition to protecting more devices with its ability to deliver 28 percent more wattage than traditional UPSs, the 5PX also boasts an industry-leading efficiency rating of up to 99 percent, a figure that certainly wasn't lost on the firm.

"We are a BC Hydro Power Smart Alliance partner, and we actually perform power audits for organizations," Woods explains. "So we're very cognizant of high-performance and energy-efficient devices and it's something we pitch to our clients all the time."

Furthermore, the 5PX is equipped with Eaton's exclusive ABM® technology, which increases battery service by 50 percent life using an advanced, three-stage charging technique that closely monitors battery health to provide advanced notification when batteries are close to needing replacement.

In addition, Woods values the 5PX's three-year warranty, which covers both the unit and the batteries—something no other manufacturer in the industry offers.

As a busy professional, Woods was also impressed by the ease with which the 5PX and IPSS could be configured.

"It was pretty straightforward," he reports. "The UPS discovered all the devices connected to it and from there, we were able to create our own shutdown commands, including runtime parameters so we could shut down the virtual machines cleanly and then shut down the host."

Once everything was up and running, Woods performed his own test of the system. *"After everybody went home, I just pulled the plug on the UPS, and watched the console as things started to shut down. It blew me away," he acknowledges. "We've got clients dying for this type of technology."*

Woods praises the initiative taken by Eaton to develop the virtualization capabilities within IPS. *"Eaton is the one who has taken the lead and taken the time and effort to invest in an integration platform with VMware," he emphasizes. "APC's software is very rudimentary and the bottom line is, it just doesn't work. We have tested it six ways to Sunday and it just doesn't work."*

What does work, Woods reveals, is demonstrating the 5PX and software live to Think Communications' customers.

"When we're talking about UPS solutions, we invite them to come into the office and we show them the interface and how it's all connected," he

explains. "If they are there at the end of the day, we will shut down the system and let them watch it themselves. That's really where we get the best bang for the buck," Woods adds. "It's one thing to tell a customer how the UPS and software work... it's quite another to watch it for themselves."

Results

The 5PX and Eaton software have enabled Think Communications to not only protect its own virtual environment, but those of its customers, as well. *"We don't even promote APC to our VMware customers anymore," Woods points out.*

With the Eaton solution in place, Think Communications is now able to:

- Safeguard its critical equipment against power anomalies and blackouts
- Ensure a safe, orderly shutdown of both host and servers in the event of a prolonged outage using IPM
- Reduce utility costs and preserve energy with the 99 percent efficiency rating of the 5PX
- Extend battery life thanks to ABM
- Enjoy peace of mind with a three-year warranty covering both the UPS and batteries



5PX tower configuration

Learn how the 5PX UPS and Intelligent Power Software can help you at Eaton.com/5PX.

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