

Case study

Huisman sees productivity surge following workstation overhaul



HP Z Series Workstations deliver performance lift and ensure around-the-clock reliability for global design teams

Industry

Engineering

Objective

Refresh an ageing, disjointed desktop environment to reduce support costs and improve design team productivity

Approach

Engaged with a local partner, and worked through a proposed solution at HP demo lab

IT matters

- Improved reliability of hardware means fewer maintenance call-outs and less strain on IT support
- Standardised workstations result in shorter times to roll out operating system updates of software upgrades

Business matters

- Improved hardware performance leads to greater productivity among design team, allowing business to take on larger projects with fewer resources
- Simplified management of desktop estate through relationship with one supplier



“Our design work is more accurate, more detailed. We’re producing fully-realised models for clients. The business benefit is very simple: we’re now better able to deal with bigger projects. Since using HP workstations we can do bigger projects with the same IT personnel.”

– Andre Faber, global manager of IT infrastructure, Huisman Equipment

Workstation standardisation creates productivity lift for engineering leader

Huisman is a global engineering leader, based in the Netherlands. With its ageing desktop estate failing to meet support or performance expectations it turned to HP to provide a long-term solution. Using HP Z400 and Z800 Series Workstations has improved productivity, cut support costs and allowed the business to take on bigger, more complex engineering projects.



Challenge

Critical engineering, worldwide

Huisman Equipment is a design engineering firm based in the Netherlands with operations worldwide. Formed in 1929, it specialises in the manufacture of heavy construction equipment for off shore oil and gas companies.

The company's production has grown increasingly global. In addition to offices in the Netherlands, it now has production facilities in the Czech Republic and China, and will open a factory in Brazil in 2014.

As production has grown, so too has the scale and scope of the design output. Unfortunately much of the hardware had not kept pace with this growth. The design teams were having to work with outdated machines, making support and software updates difficult. There was no consistency to the hardware experience.

"The result was that the computers were constantly freezing," says Andre Faber, global manager of IT infrastructure, Huisman Equipment. "Designers either couldn't open a file, or worse, a 'blue screen of death' appears. Engineers couldn't work for hours until the problems were fixed."

With the company growing, and designs becoming more complex, the design teams needed to view, create and amend files immediately. "We needed to standardise our workstations," says Faber, "and we wanted to work with one supplier. It's important we have a hardware partner capable of working with us into the future."

Solution

Workstation performance with software compatibility

Faber discussed the issue with a local IT service provider, H&R Automatisering. Its advice was to consider HP workstations, taking the Z400 Series for standard users and the higher-spec Z800 Series for those working on requiring more advanced functionalities. Both would be able to support 3D modelling software and video cards, vital features for the Huisman designers. This was followed by a session at the HP demo lab.

"It was very important that these machines work smoothly with Autodesk and ANSYS software – both provide critical modelling software for designers," says Faber. "HP has a great relationship with both. HP has customised and certified its workstations to suit, which means a lot to us."

With the decision made to go with HP workstations, Huisman ordered 550 workstations, 550 laptops and 550 desktops, a mix of Z420 and Z820 machines. The Z420 machines come with 32GB RAM, Quadro 4000, SAS 15k disk and liquid cooling; the Z820s come with a Dual Processor to deal with heavier workloads.

"HP is now standard anywhere we need computing power," says Faber.

Customer solution at a glance

Hardware

- HP Z420 Workstations
- HP Z820 Workstations



Benefit

Greater reliability, greater productivity

The most immediate impact has been on performance, says Faber: “Jobs are progressing faster as rendering is much better. The computers are running 24/7 – and the blue screen is a thing of the past.”

Improved reliability means improved productivity, he says. In the engineering design teams, where previously it would take hours to render a 3D model, the same function takes minutes. “Our design work is more accurate, more detailed,” says Faber. “We’re producing fully-realised models for clients.”

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With hardware standardised globally, support costs are reduced and the deployment of new operating systems or software updates is faster. Huisman is currently examining how best to use the graphics software and the Performance Advisor included in the workstations. Faber says the benefits are felt beyond the design team:

“The business benefit is very simple: we’re now better able to deal with bigger projects. Since using HP workstations we can do bigger projects with the same IT personnel.”

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