

Finnish insurance giant chooses HP Integrity as new SAP platform



“Taking into account our four main criteria of reliability, scalability, cost effectiveness and ease of management, we decided that the partnership of HP as project principal and hardware platform supplier and Microsoft as software platform supplier and promoter was the better choice for us.”

Ilkka Pirskanen, vice president technology,
Pohjola Group

Established in 1891, Pohjola is the second largest insurance group in Finland with 2,700 employees, turnover amounting to €1,191 million and premiums written to €798 million.

Quoted on the Helsinki Stock Exchange since 1912, the company has 19,000 shareholders and assets under management in its mutual funds totalling €1.5 billion. It is headquartered in Helsinki with 80 branch offices, from which 1,500 agents service some 1.6 million customers.

The core business areas for Pohjola are non-life insurance and investment services. Its mission is to create and preserve wealth for its customers and aims to be an innovator in insurance and investment services and the leading expert in protecting customers and their assets.

To achieve these aims, Pohjola carries this spirit of business innovation through into its IT environment and

its forward-looking approach was seen recently in the company's decision to increase the number of SAP business applications and SAP NetWeaver components it uses and to run its whole SAP environment on HP Integrity and ProLiant servers.

Pohjola was already running SAP R/3 Enterprise for Finance and Human Resources and SAP NetWeaver Business Information Warehouse (BW) for SAP reporting.

New applications

To better meet the business challenges of its intensely competitive marketplace, it decided to add SAP Supplier Relationship Management (mySAP SRM) for purchases and to improve segmented marketing with SAP Customer Relationship Management (mySAP CRM), which would lean more towards core business use and be integrated with the company's current in-house customer and policy management applications. It also wanted to form a basis for moving parts of the operational areas of policy management and processing claims under the SAP umbrella at a future date.

Other additions were the NetWeaver component SAP Enterprise Portal (SAP EP) which provides a common user interface to all the SAP applications, SAP Exchange Infrastructure (XI) which provides open integration technologies to support process-centric collaboration between in-house customer and policy management applications and my SAP CRM, as well as among other SAP and non-SAP components, and SAP E-Recruiting.

When the company decided on this extension of SAP from purely administrative tasks into its operational areas, the time was right to compare different platforms to run the existing and new applications.

"We had already been running SAP Finance and HR on a UNIX platform on IBM AIX servers and we wanted to see what would be the best platform for us to use for this relatively large number of new SAP applications and NetWeaver components," said Ilkka Pirskanen, vice president technology for Pohjola. "We compared the IBM AIX and UDB database against the Microsoft Windows and Microsoft SQL server database alternative running on HP Integrity.

Cost effective

"We wanted a reliable, easily manageable, cost-effective and scalable platform that would support our current and future implementations on SAP. The solution we chose also had to bear the financial burden of the migration costs so we also had to take this into account.

"I was particularly impressed with the service from HP - both from the account manager who was dealing with us and also from the SAP Competence Centre in Waldorf who helped us size and design the environment.

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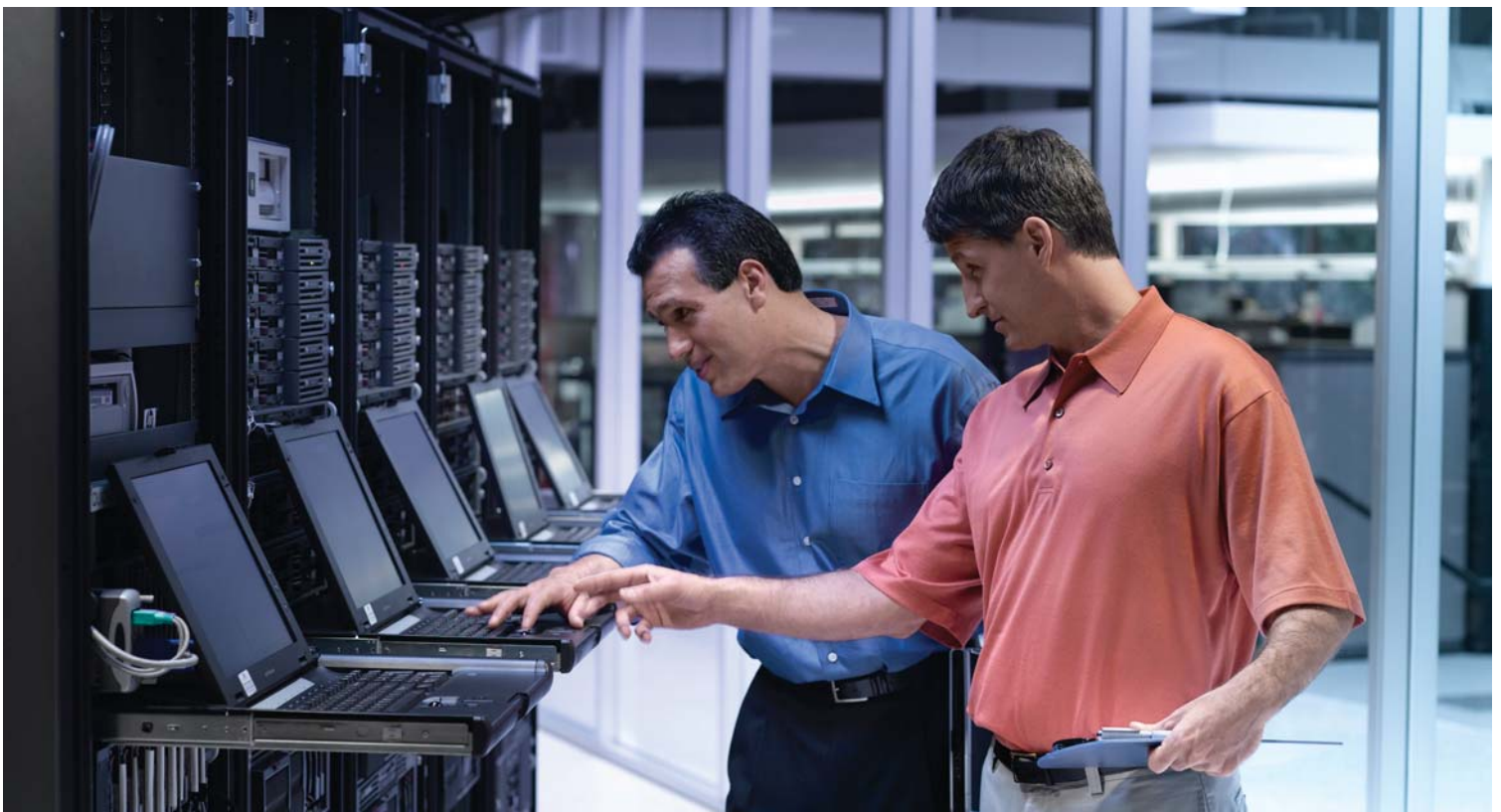
Ideal partnership

The new hardware platform, which replaced eight pSeries IBM AIX servers, and made the use of new SAP applications and NetWeaver components possible,

consisted of six HP Integrity servers and 26 ProLiant blade servers. Renowned for increasing performance while reducing costs, the HP Integrity servers have a reputation as the best platform in the marketplace for SAP consolidation, and HP also has extensive knowledge and experience of implementing SAP. During a partnership of 15 years, HP and SAP have collaborated on over 35,000 successful installations and more than half the SAP implementations worldwide run on HP infrastructures. Together, HP and SAP offer end-to-end solutions that enable enterprises of any size to adapt to changing business needs while maintaining a consistent cost structure.

At Pohjola, the HP Integrity servers are used for databases and running SAP BW, and the ProLiant blades are mainly application servers. Production installations are clustered to provide high availability. Migration from the existing IBM platform was carried out by HP partner Realtech.

"Although our core business applications for policy management and claims are run on non-SAP applications that have been developed in-house, SAP is very important to the company for administration and, as we take the first steps towards it, will be covering more of our core business applications starting with CRM activities," added Pirskanen. "We have been very pleased with the end result of the new environment we have. We think that we have achieved the goals that we wanted to reach with this investment and the HP Integrity servers and SAP applications we have implemented, so far, have been running very smoothly in this new environment."



Customer at a glance

- **Industry sector:** Insurance
- **Company:** Pohjola Group plc
- **Headquarters:** Helsinki, Finland
- **Founded:** 1891
- **Telephone:** +358 10 55911
- **Number of employees:** 2,700
- **URL:** www.pohjola.fi

Why HP?

- The HP offering represented good value for money and also met the three other criteria that Pohjola required - reliability, scalability and ease of management.
- The company was impressed with the help provided by immediate HP representatives and by the HP SAP Competence Centre in both sizing and designing the new environment.
- HP Integrity servers were accepted as the best platform upon which to achieve successful SAP consolidation, based on measures of performance and scalability and on HP's proven implementation skills in the SAP arena.

Hardware

- 2 x HP Integrity rx8620 servers
- 3 x HP Integrity rx2600 servers
- 1 x HP Integrity rx4640 server
- 26 x ProLiant BL20p G2 blade servers

Challenge

- Already using SAP business management software for its finance and human resources, Finland's second largest insurance company Pohjola wanted to improve its services by extending SAP to cover Customer Relationship Management, other SAP business applications and SAP NetWeaver components.
- To achieve this, it needed a new platform that was reliable, scalable and easily manageable. It also had to be cost effective and cover migration costs of existing SAP applications.

Solution

- Pohjola chose to migrate SAP from its existing IBM hardware and also take several new SAP applications and NetWeaver components into use. This was achieved by six new HP Integrity servers and 26 blade ProLiant servers.
- Microsoft SQL Server was selected as the database.
- The operating system is Microsoft Windows 2003.

Results

- Pohjola has achieved the crucial financial goals it wanted to achieve with this investment by providing a reliable, scalable and easily manageable SAP environment that was cost effective and covered migration costs of existing SAP applications.
- It has made a start in extending the influence of its SAP applications from pure administration into the operational side of the business, thus providing a slicker service that gives it a competitive edge in its market.
- This has increased the daily efficiency of the business by allowing Pohjola to improve its direct communication with its customers and eventually to improve its processes for managing policies and dealing with claims.

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