

Uny, a major Japanese retailer, depends on BladeSymphony to orchestrate ordering and distribution among 156 autonomous stores.

Profile: Uny Co., Ltd.

- Chain of general retail stores selling clothes, food, household and leisure items
- 156 stores in Tokyo and 17 prefectures
- More than 26,000 employees

Customer Challenge

- Renovate ordering and distribution systems to accommodate a high degree of autonomy for local stores
- Improve distribution efficiency without sacrificing system reliability

BladeSymphony Benefits

- Automates routine ordering and distribution tasks
- Provides scalability to meet growth and spikes in demand
- Delivers extremely high availability and reliability for critical business operations

Business Results

- Allows local stores to order to local tastes and preferences with high precision
- Integrates well with suppliers' systems for better coordination across the supply chain
- Helps reduce freight costs
- Provides headroom for growth

“We chose BladeSymphony for the ordering system primarily because of its processing power and scalability. BladeSymphony processes peak loads easily and also performs batch processing very quickly.”

Shunichi Wakamori, Chief Manager, Information Systems Division, Uny

Even a tiny advantage can translate to a huge competitive edge in the ultra-competitive world of retail. So imagine the importance of a major technological advantage for a retailer doing business in Tokyo, one of the most competitive markets on the planet.

That is exactly what BladeSymphony has delivered to Uny Co., Ltd., a large general-merchandise retailer based in bustling Nagoya, Japan. Thanks in part to the high performance, scalability, and reliability of BladeSymphony, Uny has been able to maintain a leadership position—and its trademark reputation for “good quality at a reasonable price”—in the face of intensifying competition.

Power and Flexibility to Support Autonomous Ordering

All Uny stores aim to be the leader in their area. To accomplish this, each store needs to win its battle over local rivals in terms of taste, freshness, quality, and service. That means each store needs a degree of autonomy in its ordering process—the freedom to precisely match the tastes and preferences of local customers.

While customized purchasing is less cost-efficient than centralized ordering in the short term, it leads to higher customer satisfaction in the long term. So rather than move away from its traditional purchasing methods, Uny elected to move to an IT platform that could better accommodate the autonomy needed by the stores: BladeSymphony.

“Selling items that have been ordered by someone else is not good for the morale of shop staff,” said Yoshitaka Katuka, head of the Information Systems Division at Uny Co. “The BladeSymphony system we selected is essential for increasing capabilities at the store level.”

Automated Ordering with Exceptional Flexibility

Specifically, Uny purchased and implemented BladeSymphony to run a new ordering system. This system automates the purchase and distribution of items needed on a predictable basis, such as milk and eggs, but leaves room for considerably flexibility with other items where demand varies by region.

"We chose BladeSymphony for the ordering system primarily because of its processing power and scalability," said Shunichi Wakamori, Chief Manager of the Information Systems Division. "The ordering of daily items always peaks at the same time, but BladeSymphony processes these peak loads easily and also performs batch processing very quickly.

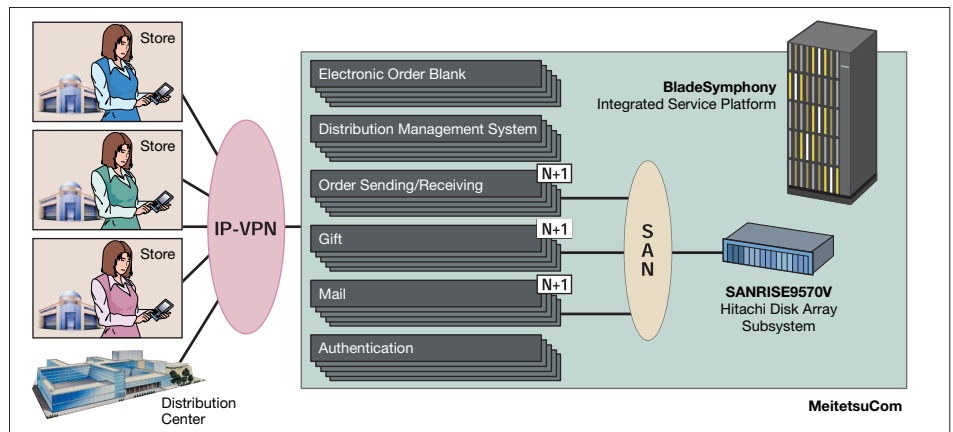
"We also had demanding scalability requirements," Mr. Wakamori continued. "For example, we can deal with increases in ordering throughput by scaling out with additional servers. We can also automate categories other than daily items simply by adding another blade." BladeSymphony makes it possible to start off with a small installation and then flexibly adapt to any future growth requirement.

Outstanding System Reliability

Uny is also using its BladeSymphony system to help renovate its distribution structure. Merchandise had previously been delivered directly from the purchaser to each store. Under the new structure, merchandise is held at a central distribution center and delivered in batches to stores at regular periods.

"We receive a batch delivery before the shop opens, allowing us to greet our customers every day with full shelves," said Seiki Asai, Manager in the Information Systems Division. "By consolidating deliveries we have also been able to reduce freight costs."

BladeSymphony was chosen for the distribution management system because of its reliability. "Daily items need to be delivered



by the hour, not by the day, so the system has to cope with very tight deadlines in avoid to avoid stock-outs," said Mr. Arai. "Merchandise is also distributed throughout the night. We therefore wanted to select a robust system."

"We could not afford to have either the ordering system or the distribution system go offline, or need to be shut down for maintenance," said Tokio Tanabe, Chief Manager of the Information Systems Division. Uny's order processing server, gift server, and mail server have increased reliability through their use of BladeSymphony's N+1 cold standby function and SAN boot functionality, according to Mr. Tanabe.

Open Platform, Better Cooperation with Suppliers

Close cooperation between Uny and its suppliers is critical to success, and BladeSymphony's use of standards makes it easier for Uny and its suppliers to work together.

"It is important to keep things open by adopting de facto standards in order to make it easier for suppliers to participate in the Uny network," said Mr. Katuka. "However, we just cannot afford to sacrifice reliability. That is why we chose Hitachi. We of course have faith in Hitachi products, but with Hitachi we can also avoid the blame game that sometimes happens when multiple vendors are involved in the solution.

"In the future, we will integrate the ordering tasks and non-distribution tasks for non-daily merchandise into BladeSymphony," Mr. Katuka continued, "The reforms that will lead to the strengthening of our stores are only just beginning."

Learn More

To learn more about Uny Co., Ltd., visit www.uny.co.jp. For additional details about the BladeSymphony server line from Hitachi, visit www.bladesymphony.com.

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