

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	BENEFIT
Improve information access, speed up information dissemination, consolidate time-sensitive information, and centralize storage for applications and databases	KenBridge, a Web-based portal using Dell™PowerEdge™ servers running Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Server and Windows 2000 Advanced Server, Microsoft Exchange 2000 for messaging, and a Dell storage area network (SAN)	Fast, convenient access to reliable, up-to-date information from a central repository; efficient access to real-time research materials; increased profitability resulting from better analysis and better advice to clients

The power of real-time trading and financial information

K & N Kenanga provides brokers with a one-stop information resource by using Dell servers and storage

The difference between profit and loss in the world of stocks often lies in up-to-date information. But even more important is how quickly brokers can access that information. Time is money in the fast-moving world of stocks, and brokers depend on fast access to information to keep ahead of the competition.

K & N Kenanga Bhd is among the top three stockbroker firms in Malaysia and has offices in Peninsula and East Malaysia. The company performs stock and share brokering, futures brokering, research analysis, asset management, unit trust management, and the provision of nominee, custodial, underwriting, placement, and corporate advisory services.

Faced with the challenge of providing real-time information to its remisiers—licensed dealer representatives who work on a part-commission basis—K & N Kenanga needed the ability to provide timely information to its representatives, who in turn provide value-added services to the company's clients. The company needed to process and make available research information, video-streaming content, a short messaging service (SMS) for trade confirmation, Web access to financial news providers, trade information, and other alerts.

K & N Kenanga takes stock of its information

Before the turn of the millennium, K & N Kenanga remisiers received information from a variety of channels, such as paper printouts and computer terminals. Although research materials from the company's in-house team were available to all remisiers

at various branches, this data was photocopied each morning and only available for use hours later.

According to Ker Chew Hua, vice president of information technology at K & N Kenanga, the company needed to disseminate information much more quickly to enhance the effectiveness of the remisiers. In fact, it was critical to the business. "The management understood this need and decided to search for an integrated system for the dissemination and retrieval of information, which would empower remisiers to better service their clients," says Hua.

Dell becomes the preferred vendor

In 2000, the company began evaluating hardware requirements to run the portal called KenBridge. "We knew what we wanted, but we also wanted a joint development approach to build an optimal solution," recalls Hua.

The company implemented an in-house pilot project with approximately 20 terminals. This project provided remisiers with the look-and-feel of the portal and an opportunity for the company to obtain their feedback. The favorable response encouraged K & N Kenanga to request vendor proposals for the system. The in-house evaluation team rejected the first round of presentations, so the company called for a second round.

Dell, among the three vendors for this second round, responded within days, submitting a recommended solution and proposal. "We were very impressed with Dell's proposal, recommendations, and



KenBridge is a Web portal that provides research information and financial news to stock dealer representatives at K & N Kenanga

ability to work closely with us. Dell was the only vendor that demonstrated the commitment and capability to meet a very challenging implementation lead time set by K & N Kenanga,” says Hua.

A new portfolio includes high-powered servers and a SAN

The Dell™ solution comprises an extensive portfolio of Dell PowerEdge™ servers, including several two-way servers and one four-way server. It also includes a Dell PowerVault™ storage system installed in various offices throughout Malaysia.

The Dell team preloaded PowerEdge servers with Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Server and Windows 2000 Advanced Server. These servers formed a Microsoft Exchange 2000 cluster for messaging and provided the management tools to run the storage area network (SAN).

The team structured a single domain with two domain controllers for high availability and fault tolerance, and configured Microsoft Active Directory® directory service to store information about network resources (users and computers). The team installed other servers and configured them as members of the domain.

The PowerEdge servers can support up to 9.5 TB of data storage when connected to the PowerVault storage system. A network interface card (NIC) and a PowerEdge Expandable RAID Controller 3, Single Channel Integrated (PERC 3/Si) help to lower costs and provide better price/performance.

The Dell SAN meets the storage requirements of the K & N Kenanga high-availability clusters. “We were looking for a very huge storage solution with high availability and we liked the redundancy features offered in the Dell SAN,” recalls Hua. Clustered servers need access to the same data so they can work together and keep applications up and running. The SAN provides a central location for shared data because data is separated from the clustered servers and placed on the SAN. A SAN also simplifies the process of attaching, expanding, and reallocating storage among multiple servers.

Using the Dell SAN, the stockbroker firm can share and consolidate Fibre Channel storage devices and multiple heterogeneous servers as well as attach high-performance centralized tape backup to the SAN. Highly available centralized storage helps to improve application performance across a network, deliver virtually uninterrupted access to data, perform fast data backup, and provide enhanced disaster protection and data management capabilities.

Smooth implementation yields results

Implementation proceeded smoothly and swiftly. “The Dell team was committed and stayed around to ensure a successful implementation. They met our deadlines and expectations,” says Hua.

Because the competition also was trying to install similar systems, K & N Kenanga recognized the importance of making the system available on time. “We needed to get KenBridge up and running fast and be able to offer our remisiers something better than the others to get the competitive edge,” notes Hua. “We integrated the back office functions and developed an alert link via SMS so clients could be notified when stocks of interest to them hit a certain price.”

The system, which can be accessed at the office or at home using the Internet, offers remisiers access to nearly seven years of historical data. Satisfied with what they saw, remisiers began requesting access to more information, such as unit trust information and real-time world indexes. Within the first three months, more than 100 remisiers bought PCs so that they could reap the benefits of KenBridge.

Convenience and timeliness improve profits

KenBridge greatly reduces the time necessary to deliver information to remisiers. What once required hours is now available online instantly. The Web-based system also is easy to learn and use. It offers convenience, saves time, and improves profitability. “Faster access to information is a great incentive for remisiers. The time saved enables them to generate more profits. They now have more time to analyze information and to interact with their clients,” explains Hua. “The Malaysian market is so news-driven that having the latest information via the Internet gives our remisiers the edge.”

K & N Kenanga has now extended KenBridge to its branches in Sarawak. Dell cache servers speed up information retrieval for the company’s East Malaysian offices; the company also has added a new two-way server for SQL clustering. According to Hua, the current system has ample room to cater to future business growth.

K & N Kenanga gains asset with Dell hardware

The system has been available for more than a year, and Hua has experienced no problems with the Dell hardware. “The servers are durable and robust. We also are pleased with Dell service, which is very prompt and reliable. That makes Dell an easy choice for us if we need more hardware.”