

# xwave Services

# ALIGN GREEN

## with Business Goals

By Mary Allen, Editor at IT in Canada

Green IT can be broadly defined as the application of technology to reduce an individual's or an organization's negative impact on our physical environment. location.

A wide panoply of activities fall under the Green umbrella, ranging from green procurement for better IT lifecycle management, to the enhancement of IT systems to reduce energy usage in physical infrastructures, or to data centre design that takes advantage of the environmental benefits offered by a particular location. One of the key components in virtually all green activities, however, is the introduction of new efficiencies to improve resource utilization and reduce consumption and waste – the first “R” in the triad introduced to grade school students.

For most organizations, the initial step towards reducing consumption, and hence carbon footprint, is through server consolidation and virtualization in the data centre. In many ways the ‘low hanging fruit’, virtualization represents an increasingly popular foundation for the development of green strategies within the enterprise, as well as a huge opportunity for software vendors such as VMware whose success in the marketplace is well known. While virtualization continues to operate as a first line of attack, many organizations have now moved beyond the server to virtual desktop and other green technologies. These now also provide new prospects at the services level – through consulting to optimize virtualization solutions that are integrated into existing IT infrastructure and in support of business goals in order that they not only offer ‘green benefits’ but also ‘green backs’.

A good example of this new consulting focus is provided by xwave, (division of Bell Aliant) one of Canada's largest IT solution providers and a company focused on capitalizing on the wave of interest in Green IT. Initially launched a year and a half ago, the company's green offerings are provided largely through the Core Technology Program , a “structured and holistic” approach to IT acquisition and implementation, delivered by xwave's Advanced Technology Solutions (ATS) consulting practise.

According to Don Bryant, xwave Director, ATS, the genesis of the company's green program lies in unanticipated green dividends (ex. reduced power use) that the ATS team achieved in Core Technology engagements with enterprise customers. These “outcomes”, combined with an evolving market interest in green, prompted the company to “mold some of their optimization methodologies and procedures” to focus on green objectives: the first technologies to be leveraged for their green potential included server and storage consolidation and virtualization. Another area that has begun to receive greater definition in xwave's green portfolio is data centre assessment – high level operational views of the data centre, with particular emphasis on power and cooling. Some showcase examples of xwave's green services activity include recent work with a 13 campus Ontario college to reduce its number of servers by half, and its



helping a long term care provider in Atlantic Canada to significantly reduce the number of its boxes requiring power and cooling. These and other customers have been able to benefit from optimization in the data centre through the Core Technology program, through consulting and similar programs offered by the ATS, and through technology provisioning with partners of computer systems that would consume less power or comply with EnergyStar or EPEAT standards.

Over the past two years, xwave's green program has gained market momentum: while green was initially an unexpected outcome from optimization work in the Core Tech program, the company now receives specific "asks" from customers about green objectives, driven in part by rebate programs offered by utilities such as Toronto Hydro or Nova Scotia Power that are buttressing corporate sustainability goals with concrete financial incentives. And as Andrew Parlee, Director, Marketing and Planning at xwave points out, the current economic climate

has added additional impetus for companies to look greenward: "being able to leverage IT solutions like virtualization and consolidation within the data centre – looking at how power and cooling is structured in the data centre – can help reduce the costs associated with IT. Cloud computing, which allows companies to share IT, is another way that organizations are looking to reduce costs, which is a constant." The key point here is aligning green with real business benefits: according to Bryant, a green program is a "win/win for organizations as it is good for the environment and they are saving some money." To demonstrate these savings, the company is able to do specific ROI analysis, through consolidation impact assessments and other tools, and to pinpoint with reasonable accuracy what the returns might be. Armed with this info, xwave is then able to outline a self-funding and staged implementation that could incorporate several projects involving people processes and technologies in and outside the data centre over several months to reach the "nirvana" state, with targeted returns helping to ensure continued customer buy-in on work towards development of the optimal green solution.

According to Parlee, it is difficult to accurately quantify the share of customers that are asking for or implementing green solutions as these solutions may not be strictly identified as "green;" however, the potential financial benefits of green technologies such as server consolidation or virtualization are well known to most customers who are now aware of and even "demanding" the associated returns. This level of awareness has been transferred to issues like standards in provisioning and procurement, and is often ultimately translated to activity in business areas outside the data centre that are looking to benefit from green innovation. xwave is definitely in the business of "selling green" as demonstrated by the development of a green program that is directed at 'aware' enterprise customers who still need to understand the "how" to execute green strategies. So far, this is green with limitations, rooted as it is in solution sales, which does not extend to carbon accounting and other measures that may be in demand as the expected changes come to the regulatory environment. When customers begin to ask, though, xwave is confident that it will be able to deliver this type of assessment through its end-to-end green consulting methodology.

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