

# Hydrite Chemical

## Logicalis Provides Platinum Managed Services for Hydrite Chemical's Hydrite Blade Center

Hydrite Chemical Co., established in 1929, is one of the largest and most respected providers of chemicals and related services in the United States. Headquartered in Brookfield, WI, Hydrite offers expertise in chemical distribution, food and dairy sanitation, food ingredients, organic processing, liquid sulfur salts, water treatment, foam control, and compliance management.

Hydrite relies on IBM iSeries midrange systems for the ERP and financial applications that it uses to run its business. Hydrite's CIO Jim Krueger says the increasing sophistication, flexibility, and economics of running Windows in an x86 blade environment compelled him to deploy mission critical applications to that platform as well.

In 2011 Logicalis architected and implemented Hydrite's blade center, a VMware environment with a three blade IBM chassis connected to an IBM storage area network. The blade center now runs more than 30 servers, including IBM's Maximo Asset Management solution, which is used to manage and maintain plant equipment, as well as an application that generates product container labels.

### Blade Center Benefits

The blade center delivered the benefits. "It's been a godsend," says Krueger. "The blade center makes our life so much easier and more flexible. If business requires it, we can launch a new server in 20 minutes to an hour."

Relying on the blade center for this mission critical application, however, also exposed Hydrite to the complexity of maintaining and managing a Windows blade/SAN environment with an IT staff that has been focused on the characteristically stable IBM's iSeries.

The prospect of downtime was not acceptable. "We're becoming increasingly dependent on the Windows environment," Krueger says. "We have Maximo running in two locations now. A third is going up in May and another by the end of the year. We run seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The systems have to be up. If the container label system is down, we can't ship product. An hour of downtime across our whole business would cost a lot of money."

Krueger had already spoken with Logicalis account executive Lisa Stowell about having Logicalis monitor and manage the Hydrite blade center and SAN after an incident occurred dramatizing the need for Windows expertise outside the capabilities of the Hydrite IT team. Stowell was able to arrange for a Logicalis engineer to resolve the immediate issue, but it was clear to Krueger that he needed a service in place providing 24x7 monitoring and access to skilled support 365 days a year.

"It's a different platform for us," Krueger says. "I didn't want to be in the position of needing an outside Windows or VMware consultant, and not be able to find one in a timely fashion."

Krueger chose Logicalis' highest level of managed services, Platinum, to maintain Hydrite's blade center. Additional core network equipment at the corporate headquarters and customer service center were also included in the contract. Platinum level managed services includes notification, remediation, problem management, software and firmware updates, change management and vendor management, as well as trend analysis and capacity planning. Platinum SLAs also stipulate that any incident is resolved within four hours.

"We wanted someone to start fixing things as soon as there was an issue," Krueger says. "Logicalis takes care of everything for us from start to finish...the whole enchilada"

### Rigorous Onboarding

Krueger says he was impressed, if a little taken aback, by the onboarding process that Logicalis required during the set up of managed services.

"Logicalis has a very rigorous onboarding process," he says. "It's based on ITIL best practices, and it's very thorough, but it required a lot of work on our side. The good news is that, now that it's in place, everything is documented and we're in good shape."

Much of the work for the onboarding fell to Hydrite Computer Operations Manager Bob Fourness who is personally responsible for the smooth running of the Hydrite blade center. "The onboarding was not a short process," Fourness recalls, "but you get out of it what you put into it. Logicalis knew what they wanted and what format it needed to be in."

The value of the Platinum service was demonstrated soon after the onboarding was completed when a disk drive on the attached storage area network (SAN) failed on a Sunday night. Fourness was notified about the failure via a 2:30 am email. By that time, Logicalis had verified the hot spare had taken over and no data had been lost and had already contacted IBM to dispatch a technician to fix the drive.

"Our next step was to open the computer room door for the IBM repair tech," Fourness says.

Additionally, Logicalis has completed three VMware software and firmware upgrades over the last nine months. The combination of Logicalis remote management with the three blade chassis allowed Hydrite to complete the upgrades during normal business hours with no downtime.

Fourness adds that the Logicalis service delivery team has been very professional and great to work with. "Communications have moved to an as-needed basis. If something we defined as important comes up, they contact us. Knowing that they are watching all the time, we are comfortable that everything is running fine."

### Peace of Mind

Besides the peace of mind from having a team of infrastructure experts at Logicalis constantly monitoring the Hydrite blade center, Krueger estimates it would cost him more than three times as much to hire, train and provide benefits for engineers to manage the blade center internally. "I'd rather pay someone to take care of this who knows what they're doing—and does this all day long. Logicalis has a whole team of experts, and they're available 24x7. It's great value for the cost. It's definitely worth the price."

### Expanding Coverage

Krueger says his very positive experience with Logicalis managed services for the Hydrite blade center has encouraged him to consider managed services for Hydrite's SharePoint intranet and a planned extranet.

"I don't worry about a lot of things," he says, "but I worry about the SharePoint intranet because it was created over several years by a variety of different consultants. I want Logicalis to use their SharePoint and SQL experts to diagnose and fix it and then look at our whole security set up before we expand to an extranet. We know they will use best practices and go through their rigorous onboarding process so it will be set up right, well documented, and they'll be able to support it."

Looking forward, Krueger says he is also considering having Logicalis host the Hydrite blade center in the Logicalis Enterprise Cloud.

"That's ultimately the direction I want to go," he says. "It's not a matter of if we are going to do this but when. Logicalis has demonstrated their skills across the whole infrastructure. That's why we're expanding our business with them. Our IBM datacenter may be empty one day, except for our communications gear."

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Jim Krueger, Hydrite Chemical