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Case Study

Nor-Tech's Easy to Deploy HPCs Lead to Client Confidence

Quality equipment that is easy to deploy, consistently good customer service,
a competitive price, and a quick turnaround on the order—that's all we were hoping for.
We received that and more.
Mo Bachir, Computational Modeling Technology Manager
R&D and Technology Center, NAFTA, ContiTech a division of Continental AG

Their Challenge

ContiTech is a leading innovator and technological pioneer for rubber and plastics products. With more than 40,000 employees in more than 40 countries, their business depends on being able to respond to important technological trends. This requires a significant amount of computing power and storage.

ContiTech's Technology Manager Mo Bachir, said, "We had an HPC cluster that was close to 6 years old and we wanted to get a refresh cluster. We saw that Nor-Tech was recommended on the Dassault Simulia website. The timeframe was another challenge--because of budget issues, we needed it in a month."

One of Mo's primary concerns was ease of deployment and maintenance—both of which depend on a technology provider that knows the client's business. The vendor that sold ContiTech the original cluster had high employee turnover. "There was no continuity," Mo explained. "Every so often someone would quit and they would send someone new that didn't know our business. It was frustrating for us—especially since we were dealing with sophisticated technical equipment."

Nor-Tech Sales Manager Bob Dreis understood. "I know they weren't happy with their previous vendor—mainly because of support issues," he said. "There wasn't anyone that was really familiar with their business. Mo ended up spending a lot of time running between his job and the datacenter."

Our Solution

Nor-Tech designed and built an 8-node cluster for ContiTech (R&D and Technology Center, NAFTA) that runs the same Abaqus software that was running on their original cluster. "Mo wanted a system that would be easy for him to maintain and monitor that they could support internally," Bob said. "He wanted us to deliver a simple to deploy system that would be easy for him to work with. He didn't want us to reinvent the wheel, just provide a solution that he was comfortable with."

In order to increase his comfort level, Bob invited Mo to visit Nor-Tech's facility. Once there, Mo was impressed. "I was able to see how they build clusters firsthand," he said. "They set the cluster up there and we could see how the components performed with the Abaqus software that we were using on our existing cluster."

Prior to shipment, Nor-Tech let Mo and his team access the cluster remotely and submit jobs. "It was comforting that Nor-Tech walked us through everything beforehand," Mo said. "That provided me with the assurance that we would be able to operate and maintain the cluster without issues."

Bob added, "I think he was a little nervous about working with us and wanted assurance that we would deliver a turnkey solution. He flew out here to see the system in advance and he was pretty much blown away. It was mutual—this client has been a pleasure to work with from the beginning."

Their Success

Once Mo and his team were completely comfortable with the cluster, Nor-Tech shipped it and handled the setup onsite. Two hours from the time the first box was opened, Mo was running test code on the cluster.

"Nor-Tech tested everything from performance to software using the applications that would actually be running on the machine," Mo said. "They didn't leave until they were sure that everything was working correctly and we were totally comfortable with the new cluster."

Ultimately Nor-Tech delivered a solution with the computing power they needed; and that was easy for them to maintain long-term. Now Mo can manage the cluster from his desktop. It is also 2-3 times faster than their original cluster.

"I'm still dealing with the same people at Nor-Tech that I bought the cluster from," Mo said. "Yes, I would recommend Nor-Tech and I did recommend them about a month ago. ROI can be hard to pin down, but not in this case. With the dramatic increase in speed, we can get the answer a design engineer needs in a matter of hours rather than days Quality equipment that is easy to deploy, consistently good customer service, an excellent price, and a quick turnaround on the order—that's all we were hoping for. We received that and more."

About Nor-Tech

Winner of Microsoft's prestigious Most Valuable System Builder Partner award, Nor-Tech is an industry-leading technology builder and reseller best known for providing turnkey, people-friendly high performance computing (HPC) solutions and Ansys HPC integration. In addition to HPCs, their custom technology includes workstations, desktops, and servers for a range of sectors including computer-aided engineering (CAE) and computer-aided design (CAD). Nor-Tech's engineers average 20+ years of experience. They have been in business since 1998 and are headquartered in Burnsville, Minn. just outside of Minneapolis. Clients include some of the largest organizations in the world. To contact Nor-Tech call 952-808-1000/toll free: 877-808-1010 or visit http://www.nor-tech.com.