

Web Services Company Searches for Critical Backup Power



Customer

Internet business application development and hosting

Markets served

Ranges from small businesses to publicly-traded national and international corporations

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*Mitchell Kahn, Owner
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Background

When the foundation of your business is helping others to improve, promote and run their businesses online, downtime is simply not an option. Just ask Mitchell Kahn, owner of MiddleCoast.net, LLC, a company based in Grand Rapids, Mich., that provides a comprehensive range of Internet services to clients ranging from small businesses to publicly-traded companies and U.S.-based divisions of multi-national corporations.

“In today’s digital economy, almost every company relies upon technology systems to operate critical aspects of their business,” Kahn explains. “Even when companies have their own information technology teams, they often need those teams to be focused on supporting their

core business and they turn to companies like MiddleCoast.net to handle their mail needs, their calendars, contact management, FTP servers and their Web presence to the outside world.”

Challenge

Not only does system downtime affect MiddleCoast.net, it affects its clients’ abilities to use many critical applications hosted by the company. Many MiddleCoast.net clients depend on the company to provide them with “always on” access to mail and file exchange capabilities.

“Whether it’s a multi-national corporation or a franchise organization, we have clients who need to ensure that they have access to their e-mail all the time,” Kahn explains. “We also have a client in the auto industry that relies on our FTP server to allow employees to

exchange design files with firms all over the world. These companies rely on us to make sure these critical capabilities are available. They don’t want to hear about problems or outages; they just want it to work.”

When Kahn initially outfitted his facility, he contacted a well-known uninterruptible power supply (UPS) distributor and described his needs. In addition to UPS solutions, he planned to install a backup generator with an automatic transfer switch. When installed, this system could route power from AC to battery in the event of an outage, then condition generator power to protect critical components from surges, sags and other problematic fluctuations until primary power was restored.

“Our initial configuration was selected because we had to

provide an uninterrupted flow of clean power to all equipment housed within our facility, specifically our data center," added Kahn. "The vendor installed the system and we thought we were prepared."

MiddleCoast.net experienced a power disturbance that tested Kahn's power protection strategy. The UPS system engaged and converted all of MiddleCoast.net's servers to battery power and then pulled power straight from the generators, subjecting the system to the risks associated with raw power. While MiddleCoast.net avoided an outage, this was not an ideal situation. Shortly after this power event, the company experienced another power disruption and the UPS system converted to battery power, but then failed to tap generator power. When the batteries ran down, MiddleCoast.net's systems went down, too.

Dissatisfied with this system, Kahn sought a better solution. He found it with the Powerware® 9125 UPS from Eaton®.

Solution

The Powerware 9125 delivered exactly what MiddleCoast.net needed: an uninterrupted flow of conditioned power. A double-conversion online system, the Powerware 9125 constantly conditions AC output, and converts to backup power with zero delay in the event of a power outage. What's more, the Powerware 9125 completely isolates output power from threats including outages, sags, surges, spikes, brownouts, line noise, frequency variation, switching transients and harmonic distortion.

The combination of power quality management and backup power met MiddleCoast.net's needs perfectly. Kahn says that integrating the Powerware 9125 into his existing system configuration was simple and seamless. The Powerware 9125 currently supports the company's primary servers, which handle critical Web, mail and e-commerce functions. Kahn says he is replacing other UPS components with Powerware-branded products from Eaton as they age out.

"The decision to purchase the Powerware 9125 was all about making sure my mission-critical machines were always up and running," Kahn explains. "Since we installed the Powerware 9125 UPS we've had 100 percent uptime. I now have greater confidence in our power protection strategy."

Result

Since its installation in April, 2004, the Powerware 9125 has saved the day more than once at MiddleCoast.net. Not long after the system went live, Grand Rapids was hit with an unexpected spring ice storm which caused a major power outage. The Powerware 9125 kept the company's servers up and running, and more importantly, kept MiddleCoast.net's customers online. More recently a transformer caught fire near MiddleCoast.net's facility which caused an emergency shut down of the power grid by the power company. Even though Kahn's backup generator failed to start up initially, the Powerware 9125 kept the systems running on battery power, and eventually on generator power for approximately 20 hours.

"We did not experience a single hiccup on any of our servers during that power event," Kahn says.

Kahn explains that what he expects of a UPS solution is what his customers expect from the services his company provides. Both simply want to know they will have access to what they need consistently and with no problems. MiddleCoast.net provides that confidence for its clients, and Eaton provides it for Kahn.

"I don't like stress," Kahn explains. "That's why I use the most reliable servers available, and that's why I use Powerware products from Eaton."



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