



## CASE STUDY

### Forecast of Growth Drives North American Lighting to Upgrade



Expanded capacity and new DR capability fit within company's budget

#### THE COMPANY

North American Lighting (NAL), based in Paris, Illinois, has been manufacturing lighting products for the majority of vehicle manufacturers in North America since 1983. The company began as a joint venture and is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of Koito Manufacturing Co., Ltd., of Japan.

NAL's Advanced Forward Lighting Operations facility, considered to be the best automotivelighting assembly plant in the world, houses cutting edge manufacturing technologies and processes while manufacturing new technology forward lighting systems. The company's business and missioncritical application software run on the IBM Power platform. As its POWER6 system edged close to capacity, NAL realized the need to upgrade for future growth while fitting current budget constraints. The company turned to LRS IT Solutions.

**THE NEED:** Sufficient computing capacity to accommodate expected annual growth in usage over the next five years.

In the just-in-time, automated manufacturing world that NAL inhabits, Information Technology is critical. The company's IBM PowEr6 570, in its fifth Forecast of Growth Drives

North American Lighting to Upgrade Expanded capacity and new DR capability fit within company's budget year of use, was handling customer orders, managing some of the manufacturing process, and performing ErP work such as payroll and invoicing. As Erik Huddlestun, Assistant General Manager - Information Technology for NAL, described it, the Power Systems was vital.

"In terms of criticality, that system is number one for us," Erik said. "It is the system we run our business on."

Once that system reached 80 percent of its capacity, Erik began working on a plan to upgrade it. He knew NAL was forecasting 20 percent annual growth in use of its servers, so he needed a system that could handle that rate of increasing demand. At the same time, he needed to keep an eye on cost to fit the new system within existing budget constraints.

Erik needed help from someone who would listen to NAL's business needs and configure the right system for the company. He turned to his trusted technology partner, LRS IT Solutions.

**THE SOLUTION:** Leverage IBM pricing to fit a new production system within budgetary limits.

Called on to help configure the up-

grade for NAL, System Engineer Paul Lesle worked with Erik Huddlestun and other NAL staff to configure the best solution. Paul performed a sizing analysis to determine the system that would serve NAL's needs as the company continues its growth into the future.

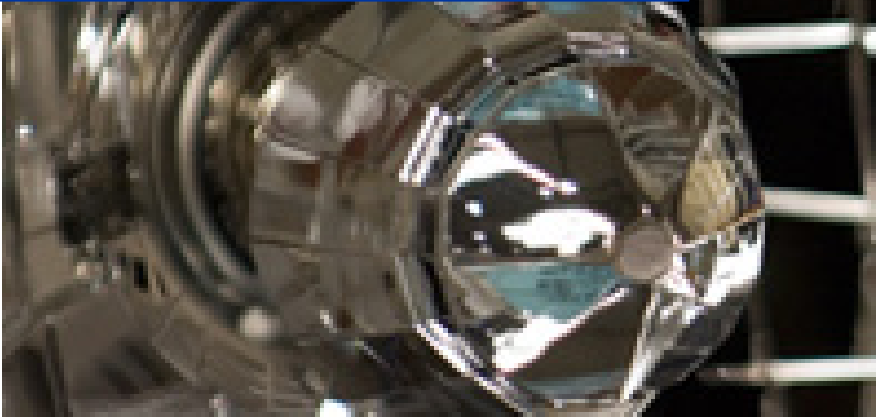
He also considered IBM's pricing structure in order to configure a system that would fit NAL's budget. Annual maintenance fees are typically part of the cost of software for systems like the Power platform, and each model is on a different tier.

Paul's recommended solution was a PowEr7 750, which features a lower maintenance cost tier than the PowEr6 570 it was replacing. He also recommended the installation of a PowEr7 Capacity Backup, or CBU, at a disaster recovery site at NAL's Alabama facility. That type of Dr capability, Erik explained, would be new for NAL.

"Prior to this solution, our Dr strategy was to restore from a nightly tape backup", Erik explained. "with our new systems, we're replicating real-time to the remote site. Our recovery point objective has improved from the last nightly tape backup to within seconds of a disaster."

*“Our internal customers really didn’t even know an upgrade occurred. That’s a testament to how well the upgrade went.”*

— Erik Huddlestun  
Assistant General Manager - Information Technology  
for North American Lighting, Inc



So the complete solution that Paul Lesle and the LrS IT Solutions team delivered to NAL included a new PowEr7 System for the corporate data center, a PowEr7 CBU for the remote Dr site, and a lower annual maintenance fee for software. with an annual payment just 13% higher than the company was paying for its aging system, the solution also fit the tight NAL budget.

**THE RESULT:** Smoothest upgrade ever.

With a proposed solution that would meet its business needs and fit within its budget, NAL prepared for the actual migration to the new PowEr7 System. with a history of using the IBM System i before it evolved to the Power Systems line, the company was no stranger to upgrading its computing platform.

“we’ve done System i upgrades several times,” Erik said. “Traditionally, migrating to the new system would require at least an extended weekend outage.”

NAL broke that tradition with this upgrade. Server outage lasted a few hours instead of several days.

“This upgrade was the smoothest and most well executed we’ve had,” Erik said. “our internal customers really didn’t even know an upgrade occurred. That’s a testament to how well the upgrade went.”

Erik also praised NAL’s technology partner, LRS IT Solutions.

“We’re very pleased with the relationship we have with LRS,” he said. “we started engaging with them over a year ago. They listened to our business needs and worked to deliver the best solution for NAL.”

## ACCOMPLISHED INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

- Updated Power7 System at NAL data center
- Power7 CBU at remote Dr site
- Fit within strict budget constraints
- Minimal downtime for internal customer

## SOLUTIONS

- Complete IT solutions, including server consolidation, storage management, business continuance services, and disaster recovery planning
- Full-service consultation from education and research to installation, implementation and training
- Professional sales staff and knowledgeable technical teams
- Nearly 30 years of experience in implementing IT solutions
- IBM Premier Business Partner



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