



More Than Just the Product

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In reviewing this quarter's TrendSetter, you have noticed the general theme of high availability. While IBM's varied offerings and alliances with other parties deliver a variety of HA solutions, users sometimes struggle with supporting high availability implementations. For years, organizations have benefited from mainframe reliability/stability and have communicated to manufacturers, including IBM, the desire to bring "mainframe like" features to the midrange tier of platforms, particularly UNIX servers.

IBM has responded well to bringing such mainframe like availability and manageability features to pSeries and xSeries in particular. However, end users are well advised to bring "mainframe culture" best practices to mid-tier platform solutions. Successful high availability solutions involve more than just the product. Take IBM's HACMP as an example.

HACMP has matured greatly through the years. However, the most successful HACMP implementations share some common practices denominators:

- planning
- design
- implementation
- performance
- development of internal HA product skills
- best practices

Keeping the system administration staff up to speed on the most recent HA offerings, developing best practices that support maintaining the integrity of the high availability solution/environment, and maintaining a management level commitment are all key in delivering an end result that hits the mark.

One thing all IT professionals will relate to is the complications and difficulties in assessing their companies' high availability needs and implementing the ideal solution. In situations like this, the best methodology is to bring in additional resources and make use of the expertise within your company and within your solution provider. Begin with a Logical/Physical Design Study (a comprehensive assessment and design study) to address your specific requirements. Then, utilize these findings to create the solution to meet your individual needs.

At the same time, Datatrend has the ability to assist in assessing the internal skills and defining the precise education and training modules that best suit a given company. This may include tailoring the classes to a particular set of business initiatives within the context of your IT environment/needs. Besides 10 years of HACMP experience, Datatrend has experience and expertise in other HA offerings, across a spectrum of operating environments and types, and can provide the education programs needed for specialized applications.

Recognizing all of the HA success components that form a complete and positive solution set will help focus your strategies in implementing your HA solution. You will be able to create a solution containing hardware, software, best practices, and education that will match your priorities and needs, while establishing your enterprise technology for the future.

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