ICON Information Consultants grows up right with HP

With reliable HP servers, remote management software and desktop PCs, business never stops

ICON
INFORMATION CONSULTANTS

"With HP ProLiant servers, we've achieved 99.9% uptime for business-critical services. I don't have to worry about downtime impacting my productivity, or my staff's. HP solutions truly drive ICON's success, and give us the scalability we need to grow rapidly."

Pamela Chambers O'Rourke, ICON Information Consultants, LP

HP customer case study: SMB solutions

Industry: technology (professional services)

Objective
Operate competitively and productively as a rapidly growing, woman-owned IT staff-augmentation company

Approach
Deploy HP ProLiant servers and remote management tools

Business benefits
- 99.9% uptime for business-critical services
- Uninterrupted customer service during Hurricane Ike
- Energy-efficient servers reduce operating costs
- 30% reduction in IT administration costs due to remote administration capabilities

IT improvements
- Centralized, remote management reduces need for onsite maintenance
- Scalability to support rapid growth
- 100% successful backup and recovery with HP Data Protector

Top-down intelligence for bottom-line success

Remember the excitement and confusion that was 1998? Programmers working furiously to update systems for Y2K, consumers shopping online for the first time, and companies scrambling to launch Web sites—what a time it was for IT consultants.

From a one-room office with a single HP desktop computer, Pamela Chambers O'Rourke seized the day. The company she founded that year, Houston-based ICON Information Consultants, is now an $81.5 million business, and growing. The company has thrived despite the economic seesaw of the past decade because it provides clients, including many Fortune 100 firms, with the expertise they need to get the most from technology.

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> Pamela Chambers O'Rourke,
> ICON Information Consultants, LP

Weathering the storm with HP

When it comes to business continuity, O'Rourke offers—and accepts—no excuses. "Business should never stop, and if it does, you need to reevaluate your technology," she says. "I wouldn't be where I'm at today if I did not utilize HP servers throughout my career."

When Hurricane Ike slammed into the Gulf Coast in 2008, her confidence in HP was put to the test. Although ICON's building management wouldn't let O'Rourke in to check on the servers, all was well in the server room. "Thankfully we're on the fifth floor, and my business did not stop because my HP ProLiant servers stayed up the whole time," she says.

Determined to work despite the office closure, O'Rourke headed home, where she keeps no less than five HP Compaq machines. "I'm a real nerd," she confesses. "I figured the servers were going to stay up, so I was able to interact with them remotely and get our billing done from home."

"Like little mainframes"

O'Rourke admits to working with HP servers for more than 20 years. "I've installed and supported HP servers since 1989," she says. "They're so durable that I've always thought of them like little mainframes, except of course these days they're faster, cooler, and more cost-effective and take up less space. Compared to competing products from other hardware manufacturers, HP ProLiant servers are definitely more enterprise-class."

ICON currently uses a single rack with HP ProLiant DL360 and DL380 G5 Servers running Microsoft® Windows® Server 2003 to support the company's critical business applications and databases: Microsoft Exchange Server, Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft Great Plains, and Bond Adapt recruiting software. The two-socket servers feature Intel® Xeon® processors for optimal performance and energy efficiency, reducing operating costs.

"I can come in every morning or log on any time during the night, and my servers are up," says O'Rourke. "With HP ProLiant servers, we've achieved 99.9% uptime for business-critical services. I don't have to worry about downtime impacting my productivity, or my staff's. HP solutions truly drive ICON's success, and give us the scalability we need to grow rapidly."

Saving staff time with robust management tools

Although O'Rourke no longer handles server administration tasks personally, she appreciates the advanced management features of HP ProLiant servers that make life easier for her network administrator. "Because he can use HP Integrated Lights Out (iLO 2) to connect to the servers from home, he rarely has to come into the office," she says. "And HP Systems Insight Manager lets him monitor the health of our servers, which helps with proactive maintenance—a crucial part of keeping systems running 24x7."
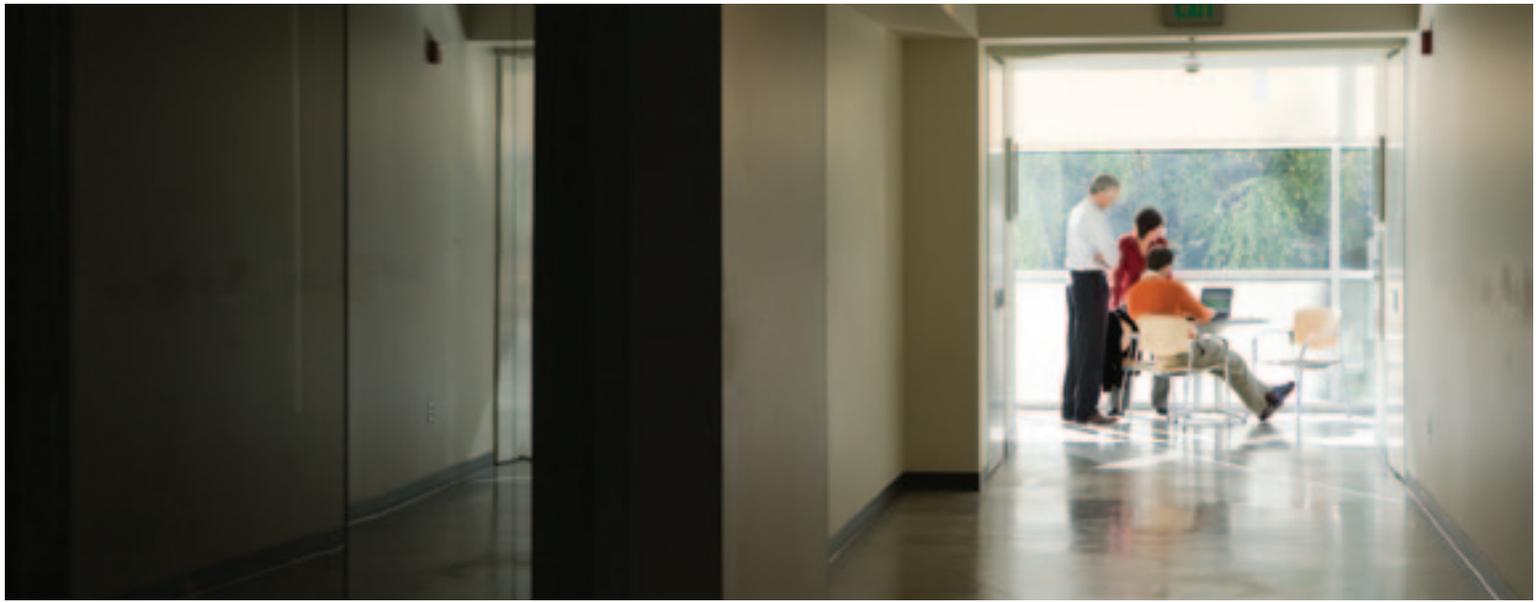
About ICON Information Consultants

Founded in 1998, Houston-based ICON Information Consultants, LP (www.iconconsultants.com) is the brainchild of Pamela Chambers O'Rourke. Using HP as her technology platform, O'Rourke grew the company from $2.5 million in revenues in its first year to $81.5 million in 2008. The company has around 750 employees.

The remote administration capability is saving O'Rourke money, because she doesn't have to pay her network administrator for the four hours it would normally take him to drive to the data center and fix any issues. "That's a 30% cost saving right there in IT admin costs. Plus we have peace of mind, because he can respond faster to any issues that might arise," she adds.

To manage backup and recovery, ICON is using HP Data Protector software. "We've been wonderfully happy with HP Data Protector," says O'Rourke. "I test our backups regularly, and we've never had any problems. Taken together, the HP solution is priceless—it meets and exceeds our requirements."

Reliable service and support

With years of experience serving demanding clients, O'Rourke knows the value of good support and solid customer service—and she wouldn't settle for anything less.

"Follow-up is awesome with HP," she says. "HP support has always been very professional and knowledgeable, with great communications skills. If they can't fix or identify the issue immediately, we always get a prompt call back."

Focusing on the future

O'Rourke recommends that all businesses, regardless of size, use the economic downturn as an opportunity to revamp their systems and processes and prepare for the next boom. "I talk to a lot of women-owned businesses and tell them that now is the time to make technology investments, because even though things are tough right now, demand is going to come back," she advises. "My business would not be as large as it is today if I did not have the right tools in place. And with the new products that HP is putting out, it's like being a kid in a candy store."

Customer solution at a glance

Hardware
- HP ProLiant DL360 G5 Servers
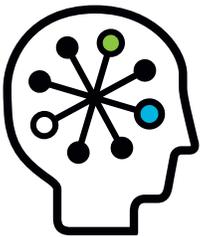- HP ProLiant DL380 G5 Servers
- HP Desktop PCs

Software
- HP Data Protector
- HP Integrated Lights-Out 2 (iLO 2)
- HP Systems Insight Manager

Operating system
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003

Services from HP
- HP service and support

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