



## Albridge Solutions

Virtualization for Competitive Advantage

### Business Value

- Server repurposing in minutes
- N+1 HA
- Lower system administration requirements
- Lower TCO
- Faster time to market

### Executive Summary

Albridge Solutions has migrated from proprietary UNIX® servers to industry-standard servers running Linux® and PAN Manager® Software by Egenera®. Initially, IT considered building a virtualized environment by combining virtualization and management point-products. They discovered, however, that resulting complexity would be overwhelming. Servers from the industry's largest vendors were also ruled out since their legacy architectures made virtualization and resource sharing impossible. Today, using industry-standard servers and PAN Manager, Albridge can run any application on any server at any time based on demand.

### Business Challenge

Ask executives at Albridge Solutions what gives the Inc. 500 company its competitive advantage, and the answer is definitive: technology. A developer and hosting provider of Web-based software that consolidates customer data for financial institutions, Albridge earned Inc.'s No. 32 slot for 2005 based on revenue growth over the past three years. The company attributes this remarkable expansion largely to its investments in IT, including development of its proprietary Albridge Wealth Reporting solution and the data center infrastructure that powers this unique application.

"Clients choose Albridge for two reasons: the quality and availability of the data we provide," explains the vice president of information systems and security at Albridge. "Our software is used by 100 financial services firms representing \$850 billion in assets and servicing 60,000 financial advisors. To deliver the results these customers demand, we invest in technologies that differentiate us from the competition. At Albridge, technology isn't an add-on to our business; it is the foundation of our business. And we're committed to doing it better than anyone else."

One of the leading-edge technologies being leveraged at Albridge is virtualization, defined by them as the ability to automatically repurpose and reallocate computing resources on an as-needed basis. In moving to a virtualized environment, the company also wanted to replace its proprietary UNIX machines with industry-standard x86 servers running Linux. After evaluating offerings from multiple providers, Albridge chose Egenera to provide the servers along with PAN Manager Software by Egenera to manage the newly virtualized infrastructure.

"When we started down this path, we knew there were two directions we could take: build it ourselves or source an integrated solution," recalls the vice president. "We could buy a hundred white boxes and get them working, but we knew the physical complexity and manageability challenges would be overwhelming. Next, we looked at traditional blade servers from the two largest providers and found that, because they're based on a legacy server design, neither of these products can virtualize resources." Instead Albridge chose PAN Manager because its stateless servers, I/O virtualization and advanced management software enabled their IT staff to repurpose servers in minutes based on application demand, quantifiably improving IT responsiveness to the business.

### PAN Manager Benefits

PAN Manager has helped Albridge improve competitiveness in several ways, including:

**Virtualization:** Wealth Reporting is a classic three-tier application with Oracle® at the database layer, BEA® WebLogic™ at the application layer, and a customer portal at the Web layer. Since PAN Manager is based on stateless servers and I/O virtualization, Albridge can run any tier on any blade at any time based on demand. The company also maintains two spare servers to make failover and incremental capacity immediately available to all three layers.

With their old equipment, every piece of hardware had a fixed identity, locking services and capacity into silos. But because PAN Manager breaks the one application/one server model, it has brought Albridge to new levels of agility and utilization.

# Healthcare

## Albridge Solutions

**Availability:** "Ensuring that Wealth Reporting is up and running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, is our number-one priority here in IT," reports the vice president. "With our client base, we simply cannot have downtime." A fully redundant architecture ensures that the data center hardware and software have backups. Likewise, PAN Manager safeguards application availability through N+1 hardware failover based on virtualization.

**Management:** New Jersey-based Albridge houses its servers with Data Return, a leading provider of managed services for mission-critical applications. As a result, all management is performed remotely. PAN Manager provides a single console for managing all of the virtual and physical servers. Albridge has found that managing a unified processing pool rather than dozens of discrete machines has lowered system administration requirements and overall management costs.

**Simplicity:** Both Albridge and Data Return were impressed by Egenera's approach, which consolidates redundant connections to power, networks and storage. In the time it takes to configure a single legacy server, they can provision dozens using PAN Manager. Through virtualization, PAN Manager has also replaced 80 percent of server hardware components with software, lowering costs and improving reliability by eliminating failure points.

**Time to Market:** With deployment for new clients much simpler now, PAN Manager is enabling Albridge to get customers up and running faster than ever before. Faster time to market means competitive advantage for Albridge clients. Likewise, virtual resources can be shared among clients, improving utilization and lowering costs for both Albridge and its customers.

**Savings:** Albridge performed a thorough TCO/ROI analysis for each solution it considered. With Egenera, the total cost of ownership—including deployment, management and third-party software expenses—was lower, compared to the alternatives.

Pleased with the results that PAN Manager has brought to Albridge, the vice president is busy spreading the word to the company's own customers. "Our technology is very important to our clients. Because it can both lower their costs and get their applications to market faster, they specifically want to hear that we're doing virtualization," he says. He has presented the Egenera story at several of their client's conferences with very good response. "By staying one step ahead of our competitors, we're able to help our clients do the same."



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