

# Östgöta Brandstodsbolag consolidates its infrastructure with virtualization on IBM BladeCenter



## Overview

### ■ Challenge

To help maintain its ability to offer keenly priced insurance products to its customers, Östgöta Brandstodsbolag aimed to reduce operational costs—starting with its server infrastructure.

### ■ Solution

Consolidated 28 stand-alone servers to a single IBM BladeCenter® E chassis with four IBM BladeCenter HS21 servers and three IBM System x™ servers, all iSCSI-connected to a virtual storage area network on an IBM System i™ 520.

### ■ Key Benefits

Simpler, more energy-efficient infrastructure; improved availability and performance; significant reduction in administrative overhead; faster backup and recovery.

Östgöta Brandstodsbolag is part of Länsförsäkringar AB, an alliance of 24 independent, customer-owned regional insurance companies in Sweden. Östgöta Brandstodsbolag offers a broad range of personal insurance policies covering life, health, travel, housing and vehicles, and also provides pensions.

As an independent insurer, Östgöta Brandstodsbolag must compete with much larger organizations. Its competitive edge lies in its combination of a strong local market presence with fast, efficient customer service. To keep its pricing competitive, Östgöta Brandstodsbolag constantly looks to trim costs from its operations, while improving service levels.

Östgöta Brandstodsbolag had 28 stand-alone Intel® processor-based servers from a variety of vendors, each with separate software licensing and management costs. Sven-Olof Lundström, IT Manager, says: “Most of our servers were running at low utilization, so we were effectively paying to

power and maintain computing resources that were doing little useful work.”

### Moving to virtualized servers

Östgöta Brandstodsbolag engaged SYSteam AB, an IBM Business Partner, to design a more compact, efficient and cost-effective IT infrastructure. SYSteam delivered a solution based on IBM BladeCenter, IBM System x and IBM System i technologies.

Services running on the 28 old machines were virtualized and now run under VMware on just four IBM BladeCenter HS21 blade servers, each with two dual-core Intel Xeon® processors, housed in a single IBM BladeCenter chassis. The chassis provides shared power, cooling, DVD drives, switches and systems management for up to 14 diskless blade servers, supporting approximately 1,400 users in more than 30 locations.

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– Sven-Olof Lundström,  
IT Manager, Östgöta  
Brandstodsbolag

"Moving to virtualized Microsoft® Windows® servers on IBM BladeCenter significantly simplified and optimized our infrastructure," says Lundström. "Instead of 28 processors we now have just 8, yet we still have plenty of headroom to add new virtualized servers. The BladeCenter servers consume less power and occupy less floorspace than the servers they replaced."

As virtualization enables Östgöta Brandstodsbolag to make efficient use of the resources of the BladeCenter—packing multiple independent virtual servers onto each physical processor—the company will need to add new physical servers less frequently than before, reducing its ongoing costs.

"When the time comes to add a new blade, we can just slide it into the chassis, pull down a standard operating system image from the i520, and get started," says Lundström. "Virtualization on BladeCenter enables us to be much more responsive to new requirements from the business."

Östgöta Brandstodsbolag also implemented three IBM System x servers running IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager, backing up the BladeCenter environment and linked via an iSCSI connector to a dedicated logical partition (LPAR) on an IBM System i 520 platform. This LPAR has 2.7 TB of disk storage and is configured to act as a virtual SAN for the BladeCenter and System x environment. The three remaining LPARs on the i520 run the core production insurance systems.

"The storage LPAR is automatically included in the enterprise backup and restore jobs on the i520, which significantly simplifies and accelerates these functions," says Lundström.

## More sustainable IT

By reducing costs, increasing performance and availability, and enabling new servers to be deployed at lower cost and higher speed, Östgöta Brandstodsbolag has gained a more sustainable model for IT. The solution has reduced the acquisition and maintenance costs for hardware, and freed up skilled IT staff from routine maintenance. "The consolidated BladeCenter and System x and System i environment has eliminated a vast amount of routine, low-value administration," says Lundström. "Our specialists can now focus on higher-value work: supporting business users and developing new services."

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— *Sven-Olof Lundström,  
IT Manager, Östgöta  
Brandstodsbolag*

## For more information

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