Mergers generate stress for employees and systems alike. Because few large companies plan their IT systems on the basis that they may need to merge at some point in the future, integration can present major challenges.

In the case of the merger between HP and Compaq, the sheer scale of the work added to these challenges. Integration of the messaging and corporate directory systems, for example, involved a total of 228,000 mailboxes that handled more than 20 million emails each week. Nevertheless, HP’s goal was to deliver an integrated messaging system on day one of the merger.

“When you bring two large companies together, emotions run high,” said Tony Redmond, vice president and chief technology officer of HP Consulting and Integration. “If the infrastructure of the new organisation works well from the start, then people will feel good about it.”
minimal impact

The messaging integration project aimed to connect the two companies’ email systems so that all messages would be routed efficiently within and outside the firewall. Entries for Compaq employees needed to be loaded into the HP Enterprise Directory and updated with hp.com addresses for external use, with the compaq.com address retained for internal use. These changes had to be made with minimal modification of the existing infrastructure and minimal impact on employees’ day-to-day work.

According to Redmond, three important factors worked in HP’s favour. Firstly, experience gained during the merger between Compaq and Digital in 1998 could be applied to the project. Secondly, both HP and Compaq ran a common corporate email platform, Microsoft Exchange. Finally, the eight-month interval between the announcement of the merger and its completion gave plenty of time for preparation. The two companies’ messaging directories, for example, could be reviewed and sanitised to ensure smooth integration.

careful planning

Thanks to a combination of experience, careful planning and meticulous preparation, the new integrated system was available on the first day of the merger. The success of the project was reflected in the fact that the help desk received just 200 calls that day, most being unrelated to the messaging system.

Redmond says this success contributed significantly to employee satisfaction during the period immediately following the merger. It also enabled the business to run efficiently, with no disruption to communication with colleagues, partners and customers. The work formed part of a wider overall integration effort, which led to a unified IT infrastructure comprising 220,000 desktops, 39,000 network devices and more than 21,000 servers. Today, this infrastructure provides a robust and reliable service to a very large global company.

For more information on how working with HP can benefit you, please contact your local HP sales representative or reseller, or visit: http://www.hp.com/

technology highlights:

hp

- MS Exchange 5.5: 122,000 mailboxes
- Microsoft Outlook 98, Outlook 2000 and other email clients
- Some non-standard email systems, e.g. UNIX sendmail
- iPlanet 4.1 Enterprise Directory running on Red Hat Linux 7.1 servers

Compaq

- Microsoft Exchange 2000: 106,000 mailboxes
- Some non-standard email systems, e.g. OpenVMS Mail

challenge

- Achieve a smooth merger between hp and Compaq
- Integrate the two companies’ messaging and corporate directory systems, which manage 228,000 mailboxes handling more than 20 million emails a week

solution

- Set up a project team to plan and prepare the integration over an eight-month period
- Review and sanitise the two companies’ messaging directories to ensure smooth integration
- Provide all Compaq employees with hp.com addresses for external use

results

- The integration team delivered an integrated messaging system on day one of the merger
- Calls to help desk were minimal
- Successful integration contributed significantly to employee satisfaction during the period immediately following the merger

“Companies today need infrastructures that can adapt to changing business conditions. Mergers are among the most fundamental changes that businesses face, and I believe that our experience of integrating HP and Compaq puts us in an ideal position to help our customers implement adaptive infrastructures.”

Tony Redmond, vice president and chief technology officer, HP Consulting and Integration