ComputerLINK and Adaptec by PMC
Keep Customers Coming
Back for More

Adaptec by PMC Series 5Z storage controllers deliver maintenance-free cache protection for startups and large companies

Introduction

Emeryville, CA-based ComputerLINK builds high-performance AMD and Intel rackmount servers, blade servers, department servers, workstations and RAID subsystems customized to specific customer requirements.

ComputerLINK's customer base ranges from Silicon Valley startups to Fortune 500 companies. While approximately 80% of its customers fall into the first category, ComputerLINK's client list also includes a popular search engine, a major telecommunications company, and a pair of large hosting/virtualization providers.

When it comes to storage controller cards, ComputerLINK's customers typically remain loyal to a specific brand until a technical or performance problem arises. When that happens, it gives ComputerLINK the opportunity to recommend new solutions – an area in which it excels.

"We test every product we recommend and we won't recommend anything we're not comfortable with," says Abbas Sabbah, product manager for ComputerLINK. "Our customers know that our recommendations are backed by our own hands-on experience, and not just specs from a sales brochure."

Adaptec by PMC support helps win customers

ComputerLINK's relationship with Adaptec stretches back several years.

"We highly recommend Adaptec by PMC to our customers. They keep us well-informed of new products and is great about sending us evaluation units so we can test them in-house to make sure they work the way they're supposed to work. A lot of our vendors don't provide evaluation units, which makes it tough to recommend them.

"The team is always there to offer advice and ideas. They'll come with us on sales calls to talk directly to the customer. Our customers trust and are more receptive to Adaptec by PMC solutions because they have a larger presence in the market. Our customers want products they can rely on".

Adaptec by PMC maintains its presence after the sale has been made, too.

"A lot of the vendors we deal with are happy to sell but are never around to help when technical issues arise. On the rare occasion that a customer has a controller-related problem that we can't solve ourselves, Adaptec's technical support is quick to respond. They'll even go to a customer's site to analyze problems firsthand and come up with fixes. I don't know of many other companies that do that."

Executive Summary

Challenge
Maintain high levels of credibility among its customer base

Provide a worry-free solution for protecting cached data

Solution
Adaptec by PMC support and Series 5Z Unified Serial® (SATA/SAS) storage controllers

Results
Repeat customers and strong word of mouth marketing are doubling ComputerLINK's sales each year

"I wouldn't recommend Adaptec by PMC if I didn't think it was the best choice for our customers."

Abbas Sabbah
Product Manager
ComputerLINK

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Preserving data and customers with Adaptec by PMC Series 5Z

Adaptec Series 5Z Unified Serial® (SATA/SAS) storage controllers are a recent addition to ComputerLINK's arsenal of recommended products.

Storage controllers typically employ battery backup units (BBUs) to protect cached data, but BBUs require constant monitoring and expensive maintenance, and can only preserve data for a maximum of 72 hours during a power loss.

Series 5Z controllers with Zero-Maintenance Cache Protection (ZMCP) eliminate BBUs in favor of 4GB of NAND flash memory to protect cached data for up to 10 years. Built upon the same high-performance chassis as Adaptec Series 5 controllers, Series 5Z controllers are up to five times faster than competing products.

"Protecting the controller cache is important, but BBUs aren't an ideal solution. They can build up heat, which can be a serious issue if proper cooling solutions are not employed. They also have a limited lifespan and eventually stop taking a charge.

"A lot of startups are on tight budgets so they won't buy BBUs for their controllers, then they regret that decision when they have a crash and lose data. On the other end of the spectrum, a lot of IT guys at the bigger companies have BBUs but they don't pay attention to them until one fails and they lose data. Either way, we get a lot of customers asking us for a better solution.

"Series 5Z controllers are that better solution. They don't require any maintenance to preserve cached data. They also don't have any heat issues, so our customers reduce their cooling costs, and the NAND flash lasts a long time, so there is no worry about a limited lifespan."

"Plus, they're the fastest controllers on the market today. We build evaluation units for our larger customers so they can try them out before making large purchases. We give them three servers that are identical except for the storage controller. Their own testing confirms that Adaptec by PMC controllers outperform the competition."

Conclusion

ComputerLINK has built a reputation of trustworthiness among its highly-satisfied customer base, and has seen sales double every year.

"We don't advertise, so our business relies 100% on repeat customers and word of mouth. Keeping customers happy by selling them reliable products is crucial because dissatisfied customers don't come back and they don't recommend us to their peers."

"I wouldn't recommend Adaptec by PMC if I didn't think it was the best choice for our customers."

Total Cost of Ownership Comparison

	Lithium Ion Battery Implementation	Zero-Maintenance Cache Protection
Adaptec 5805 + Initial BBU	$ 745.00	
Adaptec 5805Z		$ 925.00
Replacement BBU (on 2nd year)	$ 150.00	$ 0.00
Replacement BBU (on 3rd year)	$ 150.00	$ 0.00
System Admin (for 3 years)	$ 198.00	$ 0.00
Disposal - Hazmat (for 3 years)	$ 85.00	$ 0.00
TOTAL 3-year Cost	**$ 1328.00**	**$ 925.00**
TOTAL SAVINGS		**$ 403.00**

Batteries replaced every two years
Systems Admin calc based 0.1% of six year, $66k annual personnel salary
Hazmat disposal fee assumes $25 disposal fees for BBU – one in 4-year, two in 6-year

ZMCP
ZERO-MAINTENANCE
Cache Protection

adaptec
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