HP Blade Solution

Project Timeline:

- **Start Date:** July 2008
- **Estimated Completion:** January 2009
- **Actual Completion:** January 2009

Organisation Overview: Sampath Bank PLC, a private bank in Sri Lanka, operates with 130 branches and 190 ATMs across the Island.

Challenges with Existing System: The Network Operations Center (NOC) at the bank's head office faced a critical shortage of rack space and needed to replace 14 servers, including those running mission-critical applications such as the credit card system, core banking, email, internet, and antivirus servers. The mix of old tower and rack servers not only occupied valuable floor space but also consumed excessive power.

Proposed and Agreed
Solution: Transitioning to a blade environment to optimize space and power efficiency.

Project Involvement: As the Pre-Sales Technical Manager, I led the initiative to engage the customer with a comprehensive presentation of HP Blade solutions. I demonstrated the advantages of HP Blade servers using a HP 3000 enclosure and HP BL460C servers, highlighting features such as redundant fans, power units, and hot-pluggable components. The presentation successfully piqued the IT team's interest, leading to a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) for further collaboration.

Data Collection and Analysis: We collected detailed information on the existing servers, inclu ding database types, applications, server size, annual data growth, and current bottlenecks. This data was crucial for accurately sizing the new servers and ensuring they could support future growth.

Technical Assessment and Testing: I discussed with the internal team and proposed upgrades to the operating systems: Windows to the latest version, and Red Hat Linux from version 4 to 5 for improved compatibility with the HP Blade architecture. We conducted a thorough test in our lab with the HP 3000 enclosure and HP BL460C servers, which confirmed the seamless operation of both Windows and Linux applications.

Integration with Existing Infrastructure: The mission-critical applications were connected to an IBM DS 4800 SAN. Given the customer's budget constraints, they preferred to retain the existing SAN. We identified and tested an Emulex card to facilitate the connection between the HP Blade servers and the IBM SAN, successfully achieving integration.

Project Execution and Management: Following successful tests, we finalized the server sizing with HP principals and prepared a comprehensive technical proposal. The proposal included 14 HP BL460C half height servers in an HP C7000 enclosure, Emulex cards for SAN connectivity, and Flex-10 technology for efficient network traffic management.

Implementation: I coordinated with inhouse HP, Windows, and Linux engineers to oversee system implementation, testing, and migration. We adhered to the bank's ISO standards and ensured compliance with internal audit requirements. The project plan outlined key milestones, resource allocation, and deliverables, ensuring timely and cost-effective completion.

Outcome: Upon successful migration and parallel testing, the new blade environment significa ntly optimized rack space and power consumption. The project's success led to enhanced operational efficiency and set a precedent for future technological upgrades at Sampath Bank.