

THOMAS WEISEL PARTNERS

Boosting performance and security with HP Small Form Factor Business Desktop PCs



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—Homiyar Watchha, Managing Director, CIO and Co-Head of Information Technology, Thomas Weisel Partners



HP customer case study: Financial company relies on HP PCs to keep pace with trading demands in markets worldwide

Industry: Investment bank

HP recommends Windows Vista® Business

Objective:

Stay in step with rigorous demands of investment banking with fast, up-to-date technology

Approach:

Deploy HP Compaq dc7800 Small Form Factor PCs with Intel vPro technology

IT improvements:

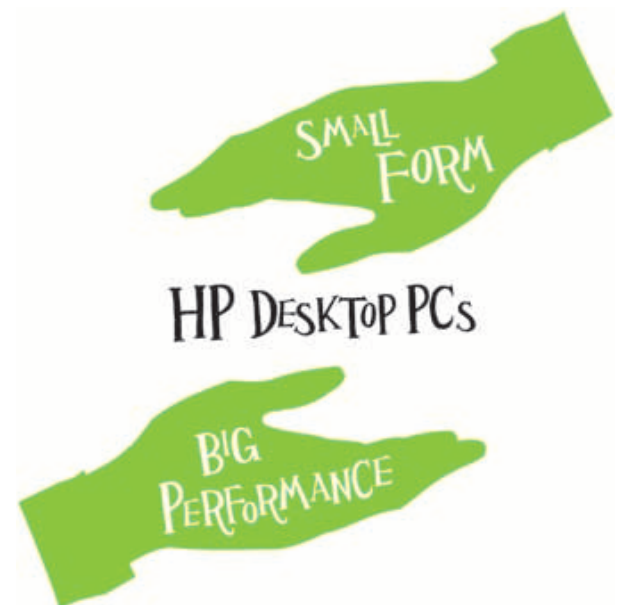
- Faster processing—login and software loading time cut dramatically
- Remote management capabilities facilitates software upgrades and will provide a central console to remediate software-based issues
- Built-in security features: Intel vPro technology provides defense mechanisms against malicious software attacks
- Intel Virtualization Technology offers virtualized protection through a virtual appliance

Business benefits:

- Traders have current pricing and trading programs execute faster
- Support for four monitors with streaming data gives traders more data for more intelligent trades
- Small form factor minimizes desk space required for PC

In securities trading, lost minutes can cost thousands of dollars. So when traders at Thomas Weisel Partners need data to support an upcoming trade, they can't wait for a PC to catch up with them. Nor can they afford to be using software that's out of date, or compromised by rootkit attacks. That's why the firm has standardized on HP Compaq dc7800 Small Form Factor PCs with Intel® vPro™ technology¹.

"The HP Compaq dc7800 PC is a strong performer in a small package," says Homiyar Watchha, Managing Director, CIO and Co-Head of Information Technology. "But it was Intel vPro hardware-based management integration features that first attracted our attention. Hardware-based management on the HP Compaq dc7800 PCs should consolidate our portfolio of utilities and provide a central console to remediate software-based issues."



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David Shipley, Technology Operations Engineer
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Thomas Weisel Partners offers investment banking, brokerage and asset management services to emerging growth companies, institutional investors and private clients worldwide. The company specializes in growth sectors of the economy with deep expertise in consumer, energy, healthcare, Internet, media and telecom, metals and mining, and technology.

HP Compaq dc7800 Business Desktop PCs chosen for company-wide upgrade

Today, the company has approximately 500 employees, after having grown substantially in the last 18 months, and 400 of them have been upgraded to the HP Compaq dc7800 PC. The PCs are equipped with Intel® Core™ 2 Duo processors,² 160GB hard drives, and NVIDIA NVS290 PCIE video cards.

“We wanted to upgrade everyone in the firm to the HP Compaq dc7800 PCs. With only one platform to support, we were able to create a standard software image and address individual user problems as they occur,” says David Shipley, Technology Operations Engineer, Thomas Weisel Partners.

In fact, TWP has equipped most of its employees over the years with HP personal computers. “One of the primary things we look for is vendor support. HP has always been excellent in that regard, and the HP website always seems to be up-to-date with any patches or drivers we might need,” says Shipley. “In addition, we’ve found the hardware itself to be very reliable, which is important in this business.”

Having robust, up-to-date technology is critical to the company’s success and nowhere is that more clearly evident than on the trading floor. Traders might have 10 or more applications open and running at once, including streaming financial data from key sources Bloomberg and Thomson Reuters. Many of the proprietary research and trading support programs are upgraded monthly.

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In such an environment, technology ages quickly. “We find ourselves upgrading the machines for traders frequently—perhaps every 18 months—because the market data applications are so demanding,” says Edward Chu, a Trading Support Engineer.

With the graphics intensive financial applications, TWP opts for a 256-megabyte video card. The company uses Bloomberg, FactSet, Royalblue Fidessa Workstation, Reuters Station and DealMaven, among other applications.

One measure of the performance improvement that the HP Compaq dc7800 PCs has brought to TWP is time efficiency: In the past, Chu says, traders would log in in the morning and wait 12 minutes to be fully logged into all of the market data and trading systems. With the HP Compaq dc7800 PCs, he says, that time has been cut dramatically.

What's more critical, though, is what happens during the trading day. When a PC can't keep up, traders will experience delays in the updating of their streaming data, or worse—they just can't run an application. Sometimes the problem is a bottleneck on a server or router, but the company routinely evaluates new technology in case it's the PC that's fallen behind.

"Information is everything in this business. We need to be confident in the quality of our information tools, and in the company that stands behind them. Over three generations of technology here, HP products have proven themselves in performance, in reliability, and in value."

Homiyar Watchha, Managing Director, CIO and Co-Head of Information Technology, Thomas Weisel Partners

It was one such evaluation that led TWP to the HP Compaq dc7800 PCs with Intel® vPro™ technology. In addition to offering faster processing, the HP Compaq dc7800 Small Form Factor PC helps users protect physical and intellectual property with enhanced security tools that can be customized to the user's needs. Intel® vPro™ Processor Technology improves PC management and provides proactive security.

Improved security, remote hardware management
PC security is of increasing importance to companies

like TWP. "We're always concerned about the risk of accidentally releasing private information," says Chu. "In managing client funds, there's a lot of confidential information running through our network. We need the best possible protection from viruses, spyware and other types of attacks."

Intel Active Management Technology, a component of Intel vPro, provides several defense mechanisms against malicious software attacks. Intel vPro also includes Intel Virtualization Technology that creates a virtualized layer of protection through a virtual appliance.

In addition, the HP Compaq dc7800 PC with Intel® vPro™ comes with improved management capabilities, including hardware-based remote management. "We are very interested in making use of the ability to remotely administer machines, push out patches and software updates, turn them on and off as needed, and check firmware and bios versions against planned upgrades," says Shipley. At present, the technical staff uses Group Policies, Microsoft Systems Management Server, and BigFix to distribute software updates and enforce security policies.

HP products chosen for reliability, support

While the IT staff values such remote capabilities, users are focused on functionality and reliability. "With the exception of a couple of shutdowns each year, we keep PCs running almost 24/7, so reliability is a prime consideration in terms of keeping users satisfied," says Chu. "And HP technology has proven to be very, very reliable over three generations of PCs we've used here."

"In addition," he adds, "HP is ranked highly for support." That includes everything from automated

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Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

General office applications and securities trading

Primary hardware

- HP Compaq dc7800 Small Form Factor Business Desktop PC with Intel vPro technology

Primary software

- Genuine Windows Vista® Business with downgrade to Windows XP Professional custom-installed*+
- Microsoft® Office
- FactSet
- Bloomberg
- Royalblue Fidessa Workstation
- Reuters Bridge
- Deal Maven

online help, patches and upgrades, to live technical support.

"With the exception of a couple of shutdowns each year, we keep PCs running almost 24/7, so reliability is a prime consideration in terms of keeping users satisfied. And HP equipment has proved to be very, very reliable over three generations of PCs we've used here. HP has a real track record with us."

Edward Chu, Trading Support Engineer, Thomas Weisel Partners

One of the challenges with traders is supporting multiple monitors—often four monitors supported by dual video cards (accommodated in the HP Compaq dc7800 PC by extra PCIE slots). "With all that video activity, you can run into some issues with video cards overheating," recalls Shipley. "A few PC generations ago, when we turned to HP techs for help in solving

that problem, they helped us find a solution quickly."

Generally, TWP's technical staff handles all the support for the firm's PCs. The HP Compaq dc7800 PC's toolless chassis makes it easy to work on. With the rollout of the HP Compaq dc7800 PCs, though, the company used HP Services to load the standard image onto the PCs prior to deployment in Canada. "That was very helpful. It freed up a lot of support time to do other things," says Shipley.

Looking ahead, Homiyar Watchha notes that the pace of business is only accelerating, and with it, the need for continuously improving performance and security in the company's desktop PCs. "Information is everything in this business," he says. "We need to be confident in the quality of our information tools, and in the company that stands behind them. Over three generations of technology here, HP products have proven themselves in performance, in reliability, and in value."

HP recommends Windows Vista® Business

Contact the
HP Reference2Win
Program, 866-REF-3734
for more information.

To learn more, visit www.hp.com

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*Windows Vista Business disk also included for future upgrade if desired. To qualify for this downgrade, an end user must be a business (including governmental or education institutions) and is expected to order at 25 customer systems with the same custom image.

+Certain Windows Vista product features require advanced or additional hardware. See

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/hardwarereqs.mspx> and

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/capable.mspx> for details. Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor can help you determine which features of Windows Vista will run on your computer. To download the tool, visit www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-vista/get/upgrade-advisor.aspx

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¹Some functionality of this technology, such as Intel Active management technology and Intel Virtualization technology, requires additional 3rd party software in order to run. Availability of future "virtual appliances" applications for Intel vPro technology is dependant on 3rd party software providers. Compatibility with future "virtual appliances" and Microsoft Windows Vista operating system is yet to be determined.

²64-bit computing on Intel architecture requires a computer system with a processor, chipset, BIOS, operating system, device drivers and applications enabled for Intel® 64 architecture. Processors will not operate (including 32-bit operation) without an Intel 64 architecture-enabled BIOS. Performance will vary depending on your hardware and software configurations. See www.intel.com/info/em64t for more information.

Dual Core/Quad Core is a new technology designed to improve performance of multithreaded software products and hardware-aware multitasking operating systems and may require appropriate operating system software for full benefit. Not all customers or software applications will necessarily benefit from use of this technology.

This customer's results depended upon its unique business and IT environment, the way it used HP products and services and other factors. These results may not be typical; your results may vary.

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