



Double duty: Aqueduct, valued reseller, trusts Eaton solutions in-house

Location:

Waltham, Mass.

Segment:

Solutions Provider

Solution:

Eaton 9PX UPS, RS Enclosure, ePDU G3, Intelligent Power Manager (IPM)

Problem:

Designing a new data center from scratch, Aqueduct sought to incorporate best-of-breed technologies in a redundant, resilient power protection solution

Results:

The combination of Eaton UPSs, rack PDUs and enclosures provided the optimal solution for the new data center—both from a protection and aesthetic standpoint

“Eaton has a great industry reputation for reliability and standing by their products. For us, choosing to purchase Eaton products was a no-brainer.”

Michael Chen, technical director

Background

Aqueduct Technologies is one of the fastest-growing private, hybrid and public cloud solutions providers in North America. Serving nearly 300 customers throughout the New England region, the company’s areas of focus include enterprise networking, advanced security, collaboration, data center solutions and carrier services.

Ranked as one of the largest IT solutions providers in North America on the 2018 CRN Solution Provider 500 list, Aqueduct was also recognized as a 2019 Tech Elite 250 and 2019 Managed Service Provider Security 100 for both its Professional Services and Managed Services organizations. Other accolades include CRN Magazine’s prestigious 2018 Triple Crown Award; being named to Boston Business Journal’s Best Places to Work for the past three years; and being recognized as a Best Place to Work by the Boston Globe and a 2018 Top Workplace by Inc. Magazine.

Challenge

When Aqueduct opted to relocate its headquarters in Waltham, Mass., in 2018, the move provided a unique opportunity for the organization to modernize and redesign its data center from the ground up. “Our initial data center came together as our company was entering its first growth

phase,” explains Michael Chen, Aqueduct’s technical director. “It was grown organically, but with no overall data center power strategy.”

In its new facility, Aqueduct desired a high level of redundancy and resiliency, prompting the decision to overhaul the entire infrastructure—from uninterruptible power systems (UPSs) to power distribution units (PDUs) to equipment racks. One of the company’s primary goals was to deploy only the most innovative, cutting-edge solutions. “We were really interested in building our new data center with best-of-breed technologies,” Chen explains.

When considering the facility’s UPS component, Aqueduct identified three additional requirements: dependability, cost-efficacy and supportability. Luckily, the organization didn’t have to look far to find the optimal solution. Having already deployed numerous Eaton® UPSs at customer sites through its role as a reseller, Aqueduct recognized that Eaton was the obvious choice to safeguard its own facility. “Eaton has a great industry reputation for reliability and for standing by their products,” Chen emphasizes. “For us, choosing to purchase Eaton products was a no-brainer.”



Powering Business Worldwide



Aqueduct headquarters building in Waltham, Mass

Solution

When Aqueduct unveiled its new data center in September 2018, at the helm were Eaton UPSs, rack enclosures and rack PDUs. Two Eaton 9PX UPSs deliver premium, double-conversion backup power and scalable battery runtimes, while a second pair ensures continuous uptime in the company's Interoperability Lab. "The Eaton UPSs protect everything in both our production and our lab environments," explains Chen, noting that the lineup includes approximately a dozen blade and rack servers, several legacy storage arrays, and an extensive mix of network devices such as firewalls, routers and modems.

Describing Aqueduct's need for high availability as "beyond critical," Chen reveals that it was this requirement that prompted the company to seek a UPS solution with exceptional reliability. "When things go down, everyone notices," he acknowledges, noting that the company put a lot of thought into a design that would minimize disruptions. "If our data center goes down, our business simply can't function," Chen continues. "Downtime is like throwing a wrench into an engine—everything grinds to a halt. With nearly everything being digital, all of our departments, from accounting to sales, require that our data center is up and running so they can do their jobs."

In addition to the data center, Aqueduct installed two 9PX units within its Interoperability Lab, a dedicated chamber where customer equipment is staged and tested before being deployed into client environments. "We depend on the Eaton UPSs to protect all of these assets," Chen says.

Complementing the UPSs are four Eaton RS Enclosures, which are available in network, server and colocation models to meet a variety of application demands. The versatile enclosure offers customizable and flexible mounting options to high-flow doors for maximum airflow to a wide array of cable management options. In addition, physical security is enhanced through a highly secure combination lock, which is particularly beneficial for data centers.

Further streamlining both protection and efficiency are a dozen Eaton ePDU G3 in managed, metered and basic models. The ePDU G3 managed technology features billing grade accuracy monitoring at the outlet level; outlet switching; and a robust design that is UL-rated to operate at 140° F (60° C) for containment and high temperature environments. Furthermore, the high accuracy meter measures current, voltage, power and energy for load balancing, capacity planning, efficiency monitoring and energy usage reporting.

"Eaton's equipment truly allows us to organize what would normally be an unsightly mess into a beautiful equipment showcase," Chen says, adding that the new data center was extremely well received by customers. "From day one, we knew that this would be a customer-facing environment and would reflect the value that we bring to our customers. Keeping it clean and tidy has always been important in making that critical first impression."

For Aqueduct, one of the most significant advantages to the overall solution is the ability to simply 'set it and forget it.' Explains Chen: "We can depend on the Eaton products to do their jobs and power our data center, even if we aren't actively managing it. This not only gives us great peace of mind, but also frees up resources to work on other tasks, such as growing our business and making sure that our customers get the best Aqueduct experience that we can offer," he continues. "Having a lesser product in place would not only lead us to constantly worry about the next unexpected downtime, but would also drain our energy and time from doing what we do best: helping our customers."

As a reseller partner, Aqueduct is able to supply clients with the highest quality solutions for their own facilities. Eaton offers partners a wide array of advantages, such as a complete solution portfolio that includes power components for converged solutions, the ability to perform data center assessments, and the fact that the line is not over-distributed.

Bill Annino, Aqueduct's Southern New England senior vice president and general manager, notes that Eaton is very forward-thinking in the IT VAR marketplace, and says Aqueduct was attracted to the company's high level of support, engineering excellence and product innovation.

With previous UPS vendors, Aqueduct found it difficult to obtain technical support, which Annino says is critically important when designing and sizing client solutions. "With Eaton, we now have a team of experts that understand the physical infrastructure space of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)," he says. "Our team works closely with Eaton's territory distributors to ensure solution accuracy and a game-changing, innovative experience for our customers."

One such innovation is Eaton's Intelligent Power Manager (IPM) software, which provides the tools needed to monitor and manage power devices in both physical and virtual environments. Easy to use and instrumental in maintaining business continuity, "IPM really helps us win projects," notes Annino. "The customers love the ease and flexibility of the product."



The Eaton solutions act as a customer showcase at the Aqueduct headquarters as well as a functional data center.

In addition to the depth and quality of the Eaton product line, Aqueduct also appreciates the value. “Businesses must ensure their dollars are stretched as much as possible,” Annino acknowledges. “Our customers are looking for products that are current, with pricing that is fair and consistent,” Annino points out. “Eaton offers both: a great product line with very attractive pricing strategies.”

Furthermore, Aqueduct reaps additional merit from the ongoing support and business development options available to Eaton partners. “We rely on the design team to get us fast and accurate designs and to perform assessments when needed,” Annino shares. The organization also takes advantage of rebates and a deal registration program, which “has been great in helping us win more projects,” Annino reveals.

With Aqueduct now planning to add another location in Providence, R.I., “We’re very excited about the possibility of expanding our data center footprint into another state,” says Chen. And when the time comes, the organization is confident that Eaton will be there to assist.

“Supportability is important to us because we understand that even with the best products, something can go wrong,” says Chen. “It was important to us that we were working with a manufacturer who has a solid reputation for stepping in to help us get back on our feet if that were to ever happen, which is another reason we chose Eaton.”

Results

Partnering with Eaton — not only for internal projects but also as a business partner — has afforded numerous benefits for Aqueduct. “If we were ever to lose power, we are confident in our Eaton products being able to support us through it,” Chen emphasizes.

With the Eaton solution deployed in the company’s headquarters facility, as well as the ability to supply the product line to customers, Aqueduct is now able to:

- Ensure high availability and continuous uptime to all of its critical equipment with best-of-breed technologies
- Safeguard client equipment during testing procedures within the implementation center
- Access a comprehensive range of industry-leading power protection solutions to provide to customers
- Gain valuable advantages such as technical support, deal registration and rebates through participation in Eaton’s partner program

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