



Eaton UPS software gives store chain visibility into over 90 stores

Location:

Jordan Station, ON Canada

Segment:

Retail

Challenge:

After routine outages caused repeated equipment damage, the convenience store chain sought a UPS capable of providing reliable battery backup during a blackout, then safely shutting down attached POS equipment.

Solution:

Eaton® 5S, Intelligent Power Software

Results:

The Eaton 5S, combined with Intelligent Power Manager software, ensures cash registers remain operational even during a blackout, while safeguarding equipment against damage.

The software was one of the biggest points for me. Because we are spread out here and there are only three of us in IT, I needed a solution in place that could be easily and centrally managed and would notify me of any issues. Eaton has the software to do that and it works beautifully.

Adrian Titei, IT leader

Background

Since 1931, Avondale has been a trusted name in the communities of Niagara, Hamilton and Haldimand. What began as a small dairy operation and milk delivery service under the name Avondale Farms Dairy has evolved into more than 90 locally owned and operated convenience stores.

Constantly growing and evolving to meet the needs of the community, Avondale is committed to unparalleled quality and exceptional customer service. In addition, the company continually reviews and updates its products, which is evidenced by its expansion to include new items such as prepared foods, general merchandise and clothing.

Challenge

When Avondale rolled out a new, computer-based point-of-sale (POS) solution within its stores several years ago, the high investment cost of that equipment forced the company to cut corners in another critical area. "We skimmed on the power protection," acknowledges Adrian Titei, Avondale's IT leader. "We used a lesser-grade protection."

Yet ongoing power quality issues over the years — including spikes and brownouts — resulted in both downtime and equipment damage,

leading Avondale to close up shop on the under-performing uninterruptible power systems (UPSs). "When we factored in the cost to replace parts, plus the loss of business, we decided we needed to address the power protection issue and purchase better units," Titei confirms. "The power issues have become worse as time goes on," he adds, noting that the majority of stores are located in rural areas with unreliable power quality.

With the goal of incorporating UPSs that were "intelligent and manageable," Avondale began investigating the best option to protect its 92 convenience stores, each of which includes one or two computer-based registers, a back office server, and a communications rack housing a variety of internet modems, routers and switches.

At the top of the company's shopping list was a UPS capable of safely shutting down attached equipment in the event of an extended outage. "We also wanted software that would work with the UPSs and be intelligent enough to notify the head office when power was lost or a battery was failing or whatever the error message may be," Titei says.

Furthermore, the organization desired a unit with a small form factor that wouldn't occupy a lot of real estate on the store floor.



Powering Business Worldwide

Solution

Avondale Stores found the perfect retail partner in the Eaton 5S. With at least three units deployed in each store location, the company has already added more than 300 units to its shopping cart — with phenomenal results.

The compact Eaton 5S UPS delivers ideal backup power for desktop PCs and workstations, with an Eco-Control capability that enables users to save up to 30 percent in energy consumption. In addition, the unit's slim form factor fits easily into tight spaces, which has allowed Avondale to situate the UPSs out of the way behind the store counters. "We really like the small form factor," Titei says.

Most importantly, Avondale is able to rely on Eaton's Intelligent Power Software (IPS) Suite, which provides all of the tools needed to monitor and manage power devices across the network, even in virtualized environments. The innovative solution combines the most critical applications to ensure system uptime and data integrity with power monitoring and management, as well as graceful shutdown during an extended power outage.

"This was very important to us, and one of the main reasons we picked the Eaton unit," Titei says. "We needed the software to smoothly shut down the machines if power was out for a lengthy amount of time or when the battery was depleted."

Eaton's software provides the IT leader with a global view across the network from any PC with an Internet browser, as well as the option of organizing a management table by views, centralizing alarms, and maintaining event logs for preventive maintenance of the entire installed equipment base.

"I have a portal where I can see all of my UPSs in all of the stores," Titei reveals. "I can see the runtime on each one of them, their installation date, diagnostics, etc. It's wonderful.

"The software makes a huge difference," he continues. "I looked at the features of other competitive solutions and the software was one of the biggest points for me. Because we are spread out here and there are only three of us in IT, I needed a solution in place that could be easily and centrally managed and would notify me of any issues. Eaton has the software to do that and it works beautifully."

Titei's newfound confidence comes from experience, having already successfully survived several blackouts. Praising the overall reliability of the 5S units, Titei reports that his previous UPS batteries lasted a maximum of one year, and some only six to nine months. Noting that he was lucky just to get 10 minutes of backup out of a unit, Titei says that when the battery ran out, the UPS didn't shut down the attached equipment safely, resulting in numerous damaged hard drives and motherboards.

"The UPSs weren't smart enough or reliable enough to actually shut down those computers before the battery was gone," he explains. "We would lose power before a clerk could even finish a transaction. The batteries would die and it would be like pulling the plug on a computer."

Now with the Eaton solution, attached equipment is not only safeguarded against damaging power anomalies but stores can continue operating even when the lights go out. "When we would lose power before, it would be so tough for the clerk to gauge how much time they had left before having to shut down," Titei explains. "Now we know we have an hour of backup so we don't have to turn customers away. When we lose power, we get a pop up window on the screen with the amount of runtime remaining," he continues. "We know we can keep going, even if we push it to the limit, because we can see when it's shutting down and we never lose anything. It's a huge advantage."

Adding that Eaton's sales process was equally phenomenal, Titei reports that the representatives were very knowledgeable and flexible. "They involved the engineering team to answer some of my questions and really took the time to explain to me every single feature, until I felt comfortable that I was buying an intelligent unit that would fit my needs."

Results

"We haven't had any problems with these units, not one," Titei reveals. "It's a very cost-effective UPS that has saved us on the cost of damaged equipment, replacement parts and business lost."

Indeed, with the Eaton solution in place, Avondale Stores is now able to:

- Ensure reliable backup power to the POS equipment within each convenient store
- Safely and smoothly shut down connected equipment during a prolonged power outage, thanks to software
- Gain a complete network view of all attached equipment using the software
- Easily position the UPS behind the counter, thanks to the unit's small form factor

For more information about the 5S, visit:
Eaton.sg/5S