

Success Story: Volta

Market Served
IT



Managed service provider elevates solution offering

Location:
Frankfort, Ky.

Segment:
Government

Challenge:
A large state government customer was not only plagued by ongoing equipment loss resulting from dirty power, but was also unable to effectively manage and support a power protection strategy across its expansive, physically distributed environment.

Solution:
Eaton® 5P, Eaton 5PX, Eaton 9PX, Network MS Card, Eaton ePDUs, Racks

Results:
The client gained exceptional protection with an Eaton UPS solution supplied through Volta's UPS as a Service offering. The option simplifies power management for customers, while turning capital expenses into operating expenses for budgeting and ease.

"It was clear that the amount of thought Eaton had put into the design and architecture of the UPSs was really top-notch. We did not find the other manufacturers' equipment to be at the same level."

Miles Cox, director of services at Volta

Background

Since 1996, Volta has provided IT support, data center solutions and managed services to a wide variety of clients—from small businesses seeking to outsource their entire technology department to large organizations desiring to move their IT infrastructure to the cloud.

One of Volta's most innovative managed offerings is UPS as a Service, where companies pay an affordable monthly fee based on the number of uninterruptible power systems (UPSs) they utilize. Engineers from Volta assess, maintain, refresh, test, calibrate and monitor each client's fleet of UPSs to ensure optimal performance and uptime. The service not only eliminates large capital expense investments, but minimizes hassles such as procurement and asset-tagging, as Volta owns the hardware. Furthermore, the partnership frees up a customer's internal resources, allowing personnel to focus on their core competencies rather than overseeing power protection. "IT staffs typically have so much on their to-do lists that UPS care gets put off," explains Miles Cox, director of services at Volta. "This is especially true for branch and remote offices where assessing, servicing and replacing UPSs is a big job."

Challenge

When a large state government customer tapped Volta to deliver a solution capable of safeguarding equipment in thousands of network closets across Kentucky, the IT provider recognized the need for a highly reliable UPS. Volta's customer had recently consolidated numerous governmental entities spanning more than 100 counties—ranging from transportation offices to child services to country clerks—all of which were in desperate need of power protection.

"They were experiencing an abnormal number of network device failures, primarily due to power outages," Cox reveals. "Multiple switches were dying because they weren't protected by a UPS."

In fact, nearly half of the equipment closets had no existing power protection at all. The remainder, Cox recalls, featured a hodgepodge of UPSs from different manufacturers, of varying ages, completely unmonitored, and many with dead batteries. "The agency's biggest pain point was having no dedicated UPS team," Cox says. "There was no one responsible for the units and they had three to four failing every week. Each time that happened, someone would have to create a PO requisition, get it approved through the finance cabinet,

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and send someone else out to physically install the new unit—it was a lot of work.”

The government required approximately 2,000 individual units—at a price point that wouldn’t get caught up in red tape. Volta went to work assessing potential candidates, requesting demo UPSs from Eaton, Emerson and APC. “The customer trusted us to provide whatever we determined was the best solution,” Cox explains, noting that Volta engineers put the various models through their paces. “We found that Eaton not only had the best product from a technical point of view, but they were also able to be extremely competitive on price.”

Solution

In November 2015, Volta initiated a six-month rollout of Eaton UPSs, which included the 5P, 5PX and 9PX models. “When we actually got into a comparison of the different models, it was clear that the amount of thought Eaton had put into the design and architecture of the UPSs was really top-notch,” Cox says. “We did not find the other manufacturers’ equipment to be at the same level.”

Among the highlights of the Eaton units were the impressive LCD display, the ease of control afforded through network management cards, and ABM® technology, a unique three-stage charging technique that increases UPS battery service life by 50 percent. ABM also optimizes battery recharge time and provides up to a 60-day advanced notification when batteries are approaching the end of their useful life.

“ABM technology definitely stood out, especially considering what we’ve seen happen to other batteries over the years,” Cox says. “We like that they are not trickle-charged. We’ve found that to be extremely valuable.”

In addition, the ability for Volta to easily monitor the ongoing health and status of thousands of UPSs dispersed across a highly distributed area has significantly eased service issues. From assessing load capacity to measuring battery lifecycle, Volta is able to proactively resolve potential issues before they cause a problem. The company has even designed specialized scripts that alert a representative if a device detects a fault. “We can do a remote battery test and resolve 90 percent of battery issues remotely, which saves our field service team tons of time,” Cox reveals.

For the customer, the end result is simple yet invaluable: optimal equipment performance, coupled with an uncompromised level of uptime. “The units just work!” Cox enthuses. “And the government is completely out of the UPS business.”

Beyond the high caliber of the product line, Volta has found a true partnership with Eaton. “Everyone at Eaton has been extremely responsive and accommodating, and our account manager has provided the best all-around experience for us,” Cox says, noting that the representative flew to Kentucky on multiple occasions to accompany him to meetings. “The Eaton team was willing to come in alongside us as a partner and do whatever was required to make this project happen.” That commitment also included meeting a very specific price point, Cox adds. “Every time Eaton went back to the well and made it work,” he reveals.

The director is also quick to praise the distribution process, which is facilitated through Tech Data. “They have a dedicated Eaton team that is extremely helpful with logistics and ensuring we meet our delivery dates,” Cox says. “It’s a true partnership.”

Volta also appreciates the depth of Eaton’s power quality portfolio, which encompasses a comprehensive suite of products beyond UPSs, such as surge protective devices, rackmount power distribution units (PDUs), remote monitoring, software, power factor correction, airflow management, rack enclosures and services. In fact, a handful of the network closets Volta manages were outfitted not only with Eaton UPSs, but with racks and Eaton ePDUs, as well.

Having access to such an extensive product ensemble makes it even easier for Volta to extend UPS as a Service to other clients facing similar IT challenges. “It’s a common issue, especially for those with a large physically distributed environment, such as a state agency, consolidated government, or a university with multiple campuses or scattered buildings,” Cox acknowledges. “This is the space where our offering really shines, and thanks to Eaton, we have the ability to provide a total solution.”

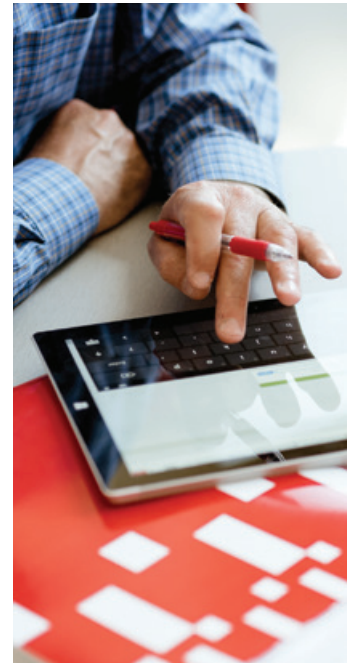
That pledge is underscored by the clear success of the state government venture; the entity estimates that UPS as a Service has saved thousands of dollars per year in equipment replacement costs and personnel time alone. “They’ve gained a dedicated UPS team and no longer need to take internal employees away from their core capabilities,” Cox emphasizes. “We have solved their pain points and filled a niche where we own the assets and provide a complete UPS field service team, and they get their power protection billed as an operating expense.”

Results

For governmental and non-governmental organizations alike, Eaton’s pledge to facilitate continuous uptime is far more than just a campaign promise. “We are very happy with the performance of the Eaton devices,” Cox confirms.

By incorporating Eaton into its UPS as a Service offering, Volta is now able to:

- Help customers prevent costly downtime and equipment damage
- Fulfill clients’ varied needs with access to a complete portfolio of power protection products
- Gain support and attractive pricing through a true power protection partnership
- Enjoy reliable, seamless distribution of Eaton products through Tech Data



For more information, visit
Eaton.com/PowerQuality

Eaton
1000 Eaton Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44122
United States
Eaton.com

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