

# COMPETITIVE EDGE

## KS2 Technologies gains business and standing with MPG's Navigator Family

Today's business environment requires a competitive edge to succeed, and KS2 Technologies Inc., an IBM® premier business partner in Grapevine, Tex., has found one in Midrange Performance Group® (MPG) Inc.'s Navigator Family® of products.

KS2 specializes in IBM system sales, consulting, development and implementations services primarily for IBM Power Systems®, Visions and many other software products. The company leads with MPG's Performance Navigator® (PerfNav®) or Power Navigator® (PowerNav®). "The first thing we do is download that software," says Dan Shinedling, CEO of KS2. "We use MPG's products exclusively to determine capacity requirements for current and future customers."

The relationship between the two companies began when KS2 had a customer with several performance issues and he couldn't figure

out what was causing the problem. "We saw an MPG presentation and were impressed. We decided to give MPG a shot at our customer's problem," Shinedling says. "Within a week, MPG was able to tell us the root cause of the problem, why it was causing performance issues and what to do about it. The customer was elated that we were able to show him quickly how to solve his problem. We were elated too and we've been using PerfNav ever since."

The majority of KS2's customers are running IBM System i®, System p® or Power Systems servers. But the company also uses PerfNav to size workloads on competitive platforms. One customer planned to move a large workload from an HP Superdome to an IBM i system running AIX® and IBM i workloads. "He had no idea what he needed," Shinedling says, "So we modeled his workload from his Superdome using the 'what if' methodology from MPG and came within 10 percent of actual based on the production-job monitor-

ing we ran after the installation. It was a good, close analysis, and the customer was very pleased with the results." Shinedling says whether going from IBM to IBM or from a competitive system to IBM, PowerNav is equally effective. "There are very few folks out there who can do that," he says.

Customers come to KS2 to find solutions to the problems caused by slow systems or when they're adding application and they're not sure how much processing power they're going to need. They also want to know what platform is best for their organization. "We help them decide what they need and help them size it," Shinedling says. "Once we're both satisfied, we get the best price/performance available from IBM and then we install it. It's turnkey."

The Navigator Family is a large part of that turnkey solution and the information it provides makes customers feel comfortable with KS2's recommendations. "Customers

are very pleased because they get a really good analysis of their current workload and of what's going to happen with their future workloads based on growth projections," Shinedling says.

Shinedling has been working with MPG for six years with great success. "Every time we sell a system, we download the software, do a sizing and let the system analyze the customer's current utilization of memory, processor and disk requirements," Shinedling says. "Then we do a projection based on the current workload and what the future looks like for the next three years and run configurations for the customer. We've not had a single customer satisfaction issue because of performance or sizing since we started this process."

Shinedling says he's seen some interesting situations with PerfNav—and the tool is always right. When analyzing one customer's system, KS2 found peak processor workloads were happening on Fridays, particularly in the afternoons. The customer, whose company is closed on Friday afternoons, completely discounted the results and insisted the software must have a bug. But KS2 and MPG analyzed the results, and, sure enough, the customer had three or four users running huge queries that took up the entire system every Friday afternoon. "It doesn't lie," Shinedling says about PerfNav. "The information we get is valid and we can prove it down to the job level, and sometimes the customer's data is a surprise to them."

Another time, KS2 had a money-conscious customer who was planning to double his workload and was concerned about overbuying. KS2 performed a "what if" scenario and came up with projections that were within 5 percent of actual. "The customer couldn't believe it and still talks about it to this day," Shinedling says. "The tool is just that accurate."

KS2's customers are so impressed with PerfNav after the "what if" that many buy it to manage their own performance issues or use it for auditing requirements. Shinedling estimates that about half the company's system installs—and nearly all of their larger ones—buy the software. "Customers love the product," Shinedling says. "It's solid, it

people find hard to grasp, but the proof was there. These tools are very good devices for documenting what's happening on an ongoing basis."

Shinedling says the MPG's customer service and helpdesk have been wonderful. "Inevitably, I'll get a system that has issues, either an



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doesn't break, it's efficient, and it takes very few resources on a customer's system. In addition, it provides more information than most customers know what to do with. There are many useful charts and graphs."

The charts and graphs came in handy with one customer who complained after a year or so that they weren't getting the performance they expected. KS2 asked if the company's workload had changed, but the customer insisted it hadn't. "We got on the system and showed them before and after data — which these graphs are perfect for — and they were shocked to see a huge increase in their workload," Shinedling says. "The increase in workload didn't correspond with the increase in business, which some

IBM licensing issue or old back-level code, or a missing software product. When that happens, MPG is very good about correcting the issues and making sure their product is operational," Shinedling says. He adds that it only takes 10 to 15 minutes to download the product and then he lets it work its magic.

"When we were looking for solutions, IBM had tools and other companies had tools to help analyze users' needs, but they just didn't provide a complete picture—now we get it with the Navigator Family," Shinedling says.

**MPG's Navigator Family™**

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