

PIER Group supercharges business with AMD EPYC™ processors

AMD EPYC CPU-powered HPE servers deliver best performance per dollar for PIER Group research and education customers.



CUSTOMER



INDUSTRY

Value Added Reseller for Research and Education

CHALLENGES

Be seen as a trusted advisor delivering the highest possible performance per dollar for customers to build and maintain long term relationships and continue repeat business

SOLUTION

Switch customers to AMD EPYC™ CPU-powered HPE servers

RESULTS

Outstanding experience and collaboration with AMD and now 80 percent of the servers the company sells are powered by AMD

AMD TECHNOLOGY AT A GLANCE

HPE Apollo and ProLiant servers powered by AMD EPYC processors

TECHNOLOGY PARTNER



Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Research and education institutions are always looking for the best performance for their budget. This means partnering with a value-added reseller (VAR) that understands which technology platform delivers the most for their needs. Value-added reseller

PIER Group specializes in providing the best-in-class computing for its customers, with a 25-year span of experience across its team. After discovering what 2nd Gen AMD EPYC™ processors had to offer, the company has transitioned most of its customers over to an EPYC CPU-powered platform.

“Our name, P-I-E-R, stands for Partners In Education & Research,” explains Chad Williams, President of PIER Group. “The PIER Group team has been completely dedicated to education and research since the mid-90s. The accounts that we support are typically the R1 and R2 (highly research active) universities along with national labs, which have a strong emphasis on supercomputing.” The powerful AMD EPYC processor was the perfect platform for these demanding customers.

High-performance computing for expanding research

“We support the campus end to end,” says Williams. “We support their network across the campus, and on the research arm of those universities, we also support them entirely with their high-performance compute needs.” PIER Group’s customers appreciate how the company understands their requirements. “Whether it’s networking or high-performance computing and AI, they’re looking for expertise and experience in articulating and architecting the solution,” says Jim Kovach, Director of Business Development, PIER Group. “We can be involved with clients for six to 18 months before we finalize the deal.

“Our customers who have bought AMD have been very happy with their purchase. AMD really cares about our business and our customers.”

Dan Fennell, Director of HPC Sales, Servers, and Storage, PIER Group

Other vendors are looking for a quicker sale. The sales that we pursue are large opportunities.”

With such large budgets at stake, it’s essential that research and education institutions make the right purchasing choice in order to have the long-term capacity and performance researchers

need for fast results. The range of applications these systems run can be vast, too. “With high-performance compute, you find as many as 500 applications across all disciplines on research campuses, including biology, chemistry, aerospace, and artificial intelligence,” says Kovach. “We’re even starting

to see high-performance compute being used by English departments and other centers of academia you never would have imagined.” This necessitates the most capable, flexible platform available.

“We help these research campuses determine the best direction to take with their architecture,” continues Kovach. “Whether it’s the aerospace department or the IT department, the bucket of money comes along once every three to five years. These are National Science Foundation Awards, so we’ve got to make sure that their computing hardware is architected correctly, and the budget is best used to allow them to leverage it for future research. If you make a mistake on the architecture, they have to live with it for many years.”

AMD EPYC processors delivered the performance PIER Group’s customers needed. “AMD EPYC processors are leading the pack right now with the number of cores you can get per CPU as well as the performance of those cores,” says Dan Fennell, Director of HPC Sales, Servers, and Storage, PIER Group. “I keep track of the market and I knew what AMD had coming out was going to be great.”

World records and outstanding FLOPs per dollar

"We met with the AMD execs at the Supercomputing Conference," says Kovach. "AMD has been a tremendous partner to work with.

We can make a phone call and get meetings scheduled when we need them. We get the expertise AMD brings to the table when we need it." PIER Group has been working with its platform partner Hewlett Packard Enterprise to ensure the appropriate AMD EPYC processor-powered Apollo and ProLiant lines of servers are specified for customers.

"We have worked very closely with the HPE team all the way back to the product engineers and product marketing people," says Fennell. "They helped us make sure that we were putting together the correct solution for our clients." AMD also provided some of PIER Group's customers with the ability to try out AMD EPYC systems both remotely and via trial servers. "They had some concerns about software compatibility, but they tried the platform out and it worked really well."

Although performance is a major factor for PIER Group's clientele, this still must be delivered in a cost-effective manner. "Price is the most important thing for our customers," says Kovach. "AMD is very competitively priced." Fennell adds: "A lot of our customers talk about dollars per FLOP, and with AMD that math works out very well."

"AMD EPYC processors are leading the pack right now with the number of cores you can get per CPU and the performance of those cores."

Dan Fennell, Director of HPC Sales, Servers, and Storage, PIER Group

Customers run benchmarks as part of their RFP acceptance process, but in many cases, it is the outstanding public benchmark results published for AMD EPYC processors that convince them. AMD EPYC processors currently hold over 200 world records across all workloads, including databases and analytics, enterprise, HCI/SDI/cloud and HPC.

Reliable roadmap for a trustworthy future

Before AMD released its EPYC processors, PIER Group was entirely selling processors from other vendors. "When 'Rome' (2nd Gen AMD EPYC) was available to sell, that's when we switched, late 2019," says Fennell. "Our customers who are looking for the best performance per dollar have been moving to AMD."

"It would be a huge mistake not to consider AMD technology. I don't know how you could consciously make a decision to spend \$5 million and not consider what AMD offers."

Jim Kovach, Director of Business Development, PIER Group

"Now 80 percent of what we sell is AMD," says Kovach. The reassurance of future proofing is another attractive factor beyond sheer value.

"AMD has done a very good job of delivering on its roadmap. Having a roadmap where clients have confidence, allows them to schedule their procurements. If you're getting ready to spend \$5 to \$10 million, the last thing you want to do is buy old technology. At the same time, you do not want to incur delays more than a few months. The majority of the high-performance compute clusters on campus are running at 90-95 percent capacity and need to satisfy the demand with purchases that they know will show up on time."

"AMD has been meeting its roadmap dates for CPUs," says Fennell. "Even the GPU side looks very promising. From providing technical assistance to porting over codes,

AMD is always willing to do what it takes to help us win. The team is easy to reach anytime."

A dependable partner

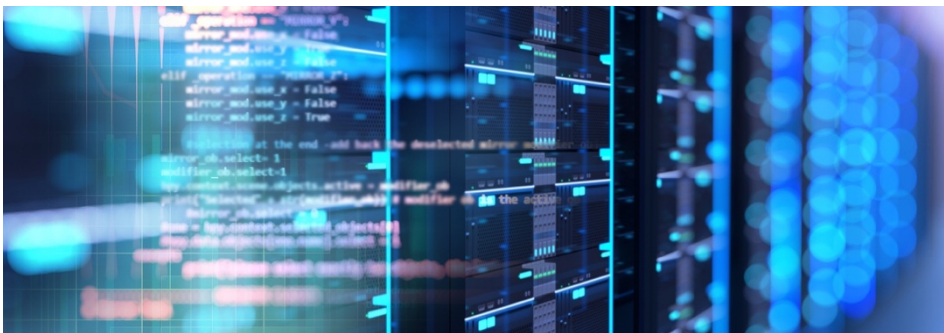
"AMD has not been bureaucratic," adds Kovach. "They're flexible, they're timely. They provide assistance at the level that we require, when we need it. Their salespeople stay with them. It would be a huge mistake not to consider AMD technology. I don't know how you could consciously make a decision to spend \$5 million and not consider what AMD offers."

"Our customers who have bought AMD have been very happy with their purchase," says Fennell. "AMD really cares about our business and our customers." Williams sums up how well AMD has meshed with PIER Group's strategy: "Responsiveness, accuracy and follow-up are at the center of what PIER Group provides its customers. AMD fits perfectly with this corporate culture. We couldn't be happier."

WANT TO LEARN HOW AMD EPYC™ PROCESSORS MIGHT WORK FOR YOU?

Sign up to receive our data center content

amd.com/epycsignup



PIER
Group
Partners In Education & Research

About PIER Group

With an average of 25 years' experience serving the R&E community, the PIER Group team is passionate about research and education and work hard every day to continue delivering the best possible technology for the best possible value to customers across the country. "Partners In Education & Research" means just that to the company; that it wants to be a PARTNER to its customers in R&E, and help them achieve all of their technology goals. PIER Group brings together maximum technological outcomes, from the most reputable manufacturers in the world. The company's strong relationships with those manufacturer partners allow it to design and provide complete solutions to address the most diverse environments and the most complex future thinking requirements. For more information visit piergroup.com.

About AMD

For over 50 years AMD has driven innovation in high-performance computing, graphics, and visualization technologies—the building blocks for gaming, immersive platforms, and the data center. Hundreds of millions of consumers, leading Fortune 500 businesses, and cutting-edge scientific research facilities around the world rely on AMD technology daily to improve how they live, work, and play. AMD employees around the world are focused on building great products that push the boundaries of what is possible. For more information about how AMD is enabling today and inspiring tomorrow, visit amd.com/EPYC.

All performance and cost savings claims are provided by PIER Group and have not been independently verified by AMD. Performance and cost benefits are impacted by a variety of variables. Results herein are specific to PIER Group and may not be typical. GD-181

©2021 Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. All rights reserved. AMD, the AMD Arrow logo, EPYC, and combinations thereof are trademarks of Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. Other product names used in this publication are for identification purposes only and may be trademarks of their respective companies.