



CASE STUDY · IT ASSET DISPOSITION

1,100 stores. 6,600 drives. Every one accounted for.

A nationwide retirement of end-of-life in-store servers and storage for a U.S. national retailer — tracked from every store shelf to a certified wipe, then sold back into the market.

Retail	1,100	2,200	~\$600K
SECTOR	U.S. LOCATIONS	UNITS RETIRED	RETURNED TO CUSTOMER

Overview

The retailer expected disposal to be a cost. It came back as a check.

A national retailer was refreshing the in-store infrastructure at every one of its 1,100 U.S. locations. Each store ran the same pair of IBM systems: an x3500 tower server and a DS3300 storage array carrying six 1TB drives of store data. The platform had reached end of life. IBM, which wasn't taking the old equipment back, brought Vibrant into the deal.

That left 2,200 data-bearing units spread across the country, with nowhere obvious to go except a landfill. It was also one of the first engagements where Vibrant had to prove secure custody and data erasure at this scale.

The Challenge

- 01

Eleven hundred origin points, not one.

Every store was its own pickup. Equipment had to be packed, shipped and received from each location, fast enough to keep pace with the refresh.
- 02

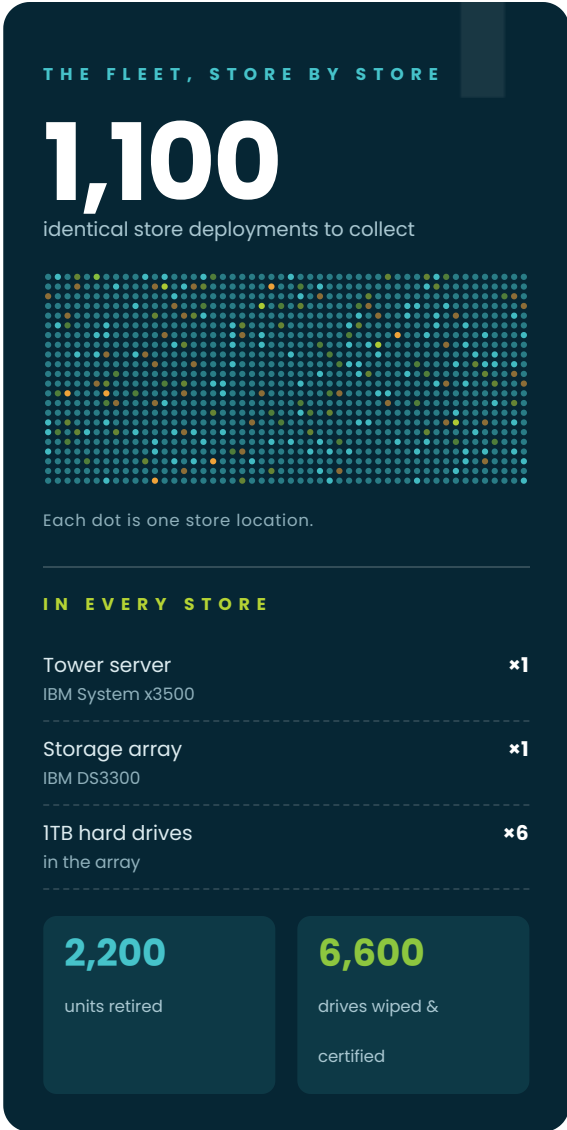
Data on every drive.

Thousands of drives held store-level data. Each had to travel from the stockroom to a verified wipe without a single one going missing.
- 03

Proof, not promises.

The retailer wanted to see where every package was in real time, and a serial-level record of what happened to it when the work was done.

The alternative: 2,200 units of end-of-life hardware — and every drive in them — headed for scrap, with no recovery and no record.



The Approach

We built the chain of custody before the first box shipped.

No off-the-shelf process covered 1,100 stores. Vibrant sat down with the retailer's team, agreed on expectations up front, and then delivered against them — one serialized handoff at a time.

STEP 01

Agree the rules first

Working sessions with the retailer set pickup timing, tracking, reporting and sign-off before any store was touched.

CUSTOM PLAN

STEP 02

Ship the packaging to the store

Vibrant sourced custom-fabricated inserts and sent box-and-insert kits to every location, so store staff could pack both units safely themselves.

1,100 KITS

STEP 03

Track every package home

Each return shipment tracked from store to warehouse, with status visible to the retailer in real time throughout the rollout.

REAL-TIME AUDIT

STEP 04

Log every serial on arrival

Each shipment received at our warehouse and checked in against its store, with every server, array and drive serial number logged on intake.

SERIALIZED INTAKE

STEP 05

Wipe, verify, certify

Every drive sanitized and verified, with certification of data wipe provided. Any drive that failed test or wipe was physically destroyed.

6,600 DRIVES

STEP 06

Remarket for maximum return

Tested equipment sold back into the secondary market — as complete units where they sold best, and as components where the value sat.

95% RESOLD

WHERE THE VALUE WAS

Parted out, not sold as scrap.

Selling 2,200 whole chassis into the market would have left money on the table. Knowing which parts carried the value is what turned disposal into a return.

RETIRED ASSET

DS3300 storage array

1726-HC3 / 1726-32X

1TB hard drives

From every array

x3500 tower server

7977-AC1

HOW IT WAS REMARKETED

Complete, with dual controllers, dual power and rail kit — and heavily as standalone controllers

Wiped, verified and resold as individual drives

System boards harvested — where most of the server's value sat

SOLD AS

39R6501
44W2170

43W7633
43W7630

44R5619

The Results

~\$600K

returned to the retailer on hardware it had written off

95%

of incoming equipment resold back into the market

100%

diverted from landfill — what didn't resell was recycled

- 1,100 locations cleared through a single vendor, on the retailer's refresh schedule
- 6,600 drives wiped and certified, with a serial-level record of every unit
- Every shipment tracked in real time, from stockroom to warehouse
- Failed drives physically destroyed, none resold or discarded
- From cost line to revenue: equipment destined for scrap came back as a return

THE BROADER POINT

Multi-site refreshes rarely fail in the data center. They fail at store 847 — the box that never came back, the drive nobody logged. At this scale, data security is a logistics problem first.

Scale doesn't excuse a gap in custody. It's where one is most likely.

BUILT FOR MULTI-SITE REFRESHES IN

RETAIL

RESTAURANTS

BANKING

HEALTHCARE

HOSPITALITY

Planning a multi-site refresh? Send us a site count.

Tell us how many locations and what's in them. We'll come back with a logistics plan, a chain-of-custody approach and a value-recovery estimate.

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