Global Financial Institution

Global financial institution improves competitive advantage with Micro Focus® Solution Management Services, which dramatically increases productivity.

Overview

A large, global financial institute commissioned Solution Management Services (SMS) to streamline and manage its Data Center Tools support, thereby enabling the company to focus on the strategic alignment of infrastructure tools, mission-critical security, and customer-facing services. In an ongoing project, SMS increased the automation efficiency of over 5,000 physical and virtual servers from 75% to 95%, raising the productivity of its IT staff dramatically.
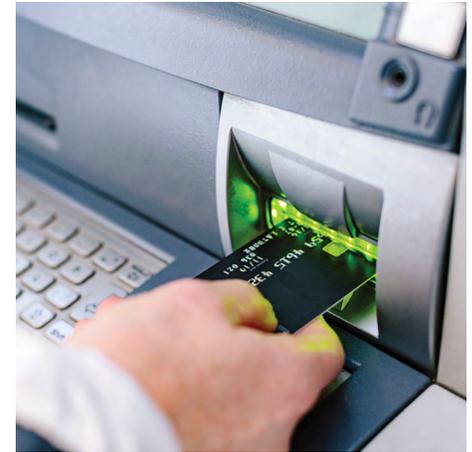
Challenge

A financial institution of this size and worldwide reach constantly faces growth and an expanding need for secure server power on demand, often from acquisition pressures. In order to improve server productivity and compliance, the Senior IT Manager responsible for operational support of up to 15,000 physical and virtual servers, proactively ran a full analysis of the company's support skill sets and its ability to maintain its huge server infrastructure, as well as its new portfolio of Micro Focus server automation and management tools. He found gaps that needed filling to achieve the required standard of operation, and decided to find a vendor to improve and manage the production side of the data center. The result was a strong partnership with SMS, one that met his ambitious goals, and which brought the books into the green in good fashion.

Solution

"Our overall goal is to have SMS automate and manage our entire server infrastructure of around 15,000 servers, including about a million related assets, as quickly as possible," explains the Senior IT Manager. "Based on our experience with…and our evaluation, we expected a successful project. But we were pleasantly surprised at how quickly we met our break-even point and rolled over into the green. When we reached the 4,000 server implementation mark, the project paid for itself. Everything after that was money back into our company for our key projects."

During the evaluation, the company assessed several large technology solution providers to farm out the automation of its data centers, leverage its IT power, and make expert use of its Micro Focus portfolio of data center management tools. The IT department also wanted a vendor with a single point of accountability for Data Center Infrastructure tools, and that would establish industry best practices, driving quality and efficiency higher.

The Senior IT Manager says that, in the process, his team planned to consolidate the 15,000 servers, thereby building a more consistent image of hardware, as opposed to the dispersed group of assets from a variety of different companies.

At a Glance

■ **Industry**
Financial Services

■ **Location**
Undisclosed

■ **Challenge**
Increase security and reduce risk by automating huge server production environment and outsource management to third-party company for increased efficiencies and best practices expertise

■ **Products and Services**
Solution Management Services

■ **Results**
+ Reached return on investment early and now investing profits back into business-critical projects, products and services to maintain competitive advantage
+ Realized significant savings by consolidating 15,000 servers to about 10,000 • Provides managed security and compliance for continuously expanding environment, which is required to service the business
+ Provided managed security and compliance for continuously expanding environment, which is required to service the business

"The overriding factor that swayed the majority of people involved in the decision was…knowledge of the management applications and how they were intended to function," he recalls. "We also realized that the close interface…between its development organization and its support and professional services was a distinct advantage over the other vendors. Complete ownership and response was an important factor."

Results

SMS Provides Productive Partnership

The resulting three year contract with SMS supplies a Production Support team consisting of about 15 SMS staff in its offsite support center. These staff members work seamlessly with four dedicated company employees and an onsite SMS service manager.

"The partnership with our SMS representatives is terrific, whether they are supplying information that we need or simply calling up to find out if we're were satisfied," says the Senior IT Manager. "Together, we have made strong gains in efficiencies and they are as responsive as you would expect one of your best employees to be."

The SMS Production Support team now manages server automation and troubleshooting for the organization, which frees up the organization's own IT staff to accomplish its planned consolidation. Since the inception of SMS, about 5,000 of the company's 15,000 servers are now under managed service. By the following year, the count will be doubled. The Senior IT Manager estimates that, when the transition is complete, his IT staff will have consolidated 15,000 servers down to about 10,000, realizing very significant savings.

Automation Rocket-Boosts Efficiencies

The Senior IT Manager again mentions the importance of providing a secure and reliable financial experience to its customer base. They expect it, and negative press from a security breach, is hard to recover from and to be avoided at all cost. He cites damaging security attacks in the past few years that have exposed a few of the competing financial institutions as having security gaps and the resultant damage to their brand. The SMS solution helps defend against this type of breech by ensuring that 95% and greater of the companies large data centers are automatically upgraded with up to the minute software. "Time is a very critical benefit with which SMS has armed us," stresses the Senior IT Manager. "Before implementing SMS to manage and operate our data center production environment, it would have taken 50 to 100 staff a long time to make all our systems up-to-the-minute compliant and secure. Now, we can automatically patch a couple of thousand servers with a handful of SMS staff in two to three hours. The scale of efficiencies gained is very exciting."

The two most mission-critical Micro Focus applications in use, according to the Senior IT Manager, are Micro Focus Service Manager and Micro Focus Server Automation. Service Manager acts as the central point for most of the Micro Focus tools and for the service desk instant triage process. Server Automation handles the majority of the heavy lifting for the data center in terms of provisioning and patching. And these, in turn, are managed by SMS.

SMS handles all issues and resolves them. Any level three issues, are elevated to the company, and resolution is jointly decided. SMS also identifies and implements proactive solutions as needed to continuously drive improvements. Within the last quarter, for example, the SMS Production team provided solutions along with code modification for seven requests-for-change tickets to improve our Service Manager implementation's performance and end user experience.

SMS Frees IT Staff to Produce Critical Services and Products

Creating new competitive products and services is the life-blood of any company, and especially so with a global financial institution. Prior to SMS automating and managing the vast server centers, the rate of efficiency was hovering around 75%. This means that servers and their business applications (both existing and new) were less available since maintenance windows were longer, more frequent, and dispersed throughout the business week. Impressively, SMS has increased patching automation efficiency to over 95%, while simultaneously reducing the incident rate by 80%. According to the Senior IT Manager in charge of the ingenuous project, all these numbers translate directly into savings, significantly increased productivity, and maintaining the hard-earned corporate competitive advantage and brand security.

"People can count on these services when they need them," concludes the Senior IT Manager. "We can build a new product without unneeded delays. By hiring SMS to manage this area, we are making more money, have a better competitive advantage, and are seeing considerable cost savings. SMS is off campus, everything's working fine, and we can now dedicate our IT staff to tackling the projects that create our world-famous brand and reputation."

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