THE BENEFITS OF CONSOLIDATING MONITORING IN A MULTICLIENT, MULTITENANT OUTSOURCED ENVIRONMENT

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's a reason so many of the world's top companies choose Ensono™ to help them operate their IT infrastructures and support mission-critical workloads. Formerly Acxiom IT, Ensono has a 46-year history of exceeding customer expectations. Our exceptional quality has helped us garner much recognition, including the #1 ranking in customer satisfaction for IT outsourcing in Data Monitor's Black Book of Outsourcing and a 100 percent availability rating from Uptime Institute. We think of ourselves as seamless extensions of our clients' IT teams, providing them with managed mainframe services, infrastructure management, and secure cloud solutions.

Effective monitoring is crucial to delivering the level of service our clients require and expect. It's a tough job because we have more than 68,000 mainframe MIPS, 10,000 servers, and 10 petabytes of storage under management. We deal with just about any brand of hardware you can think of and every type of operating system going back as far as OS/2 and all the way forward to today's latest and greatest. We host everything from internal mail servers to ecommerce applications that accept credit cards and healthcare systems that store patient records. We support virtually every kind of database and application, which means we need a variety of tools and technologies to help us manage the huge and diverse Ensono environment.

Transforming the Monitoring Environment

Since 2001, we've relied on solutions from BMC Software to monitor major portions of the environment that we manage. However, we still deal with monitoring tools from other vendors, some of which are owned by clients and others that we've implemented to address specific client requirements. This patchwork of diverse tools worked well in the past. To support today's complex IT needs, however, we need a sophisticated, holistic monitoring strategy that covers mainframe to cloud and everything in between. With that in mind, we are transforming our monitoring environment and standardizing on a single solution that converges application and infrastructure monitoring and centralizes visibility across diverse platforms. Our monitoring solution of choice is TrueSight Operations Management from BMC Software.

Historically, monitoring at Ensono has been infrastructure focused, with the emphasis on file systems, data tables, servers, and network devices. We also provide clients with end-user experience monitoring. Our new strategy takes us to the next level: combining application and infrastructure in a single view through TrueSight Operations Management.

Over the next six months, we're upgrading our current BMC monitoring solutions and phasing out non-BMC solutions wherever possible to achieve this centralized visibility into our environment. TrueSight gives us the ability to bring our many different client systems and technologies into a consolidated view. This unification eliminates 15 different tools and consoles our support engineers have had to deal with in the past. They're enthusiastic about gaining visibility across platforms and clients and being able to drill down quickly into the many different hardware types, operating systems, applications, and other application and infrastructure components.

Speed, Efficiency and Focus

A key focus of our strategy is faster, more accurate root cause analysis so we can quickly get to the heart of problems and resolve them in less time. Identifying and prioritizing critical issues can be extremely difficult in large environments like ours because of the huge volumes of tickets that are generated. Historically we've done a good job of creating rules that filter incoming tickets to make it easier to identify critical issues. But our goal is to do an even better job, and we're making progress.

For example, one of our clients was using a non-BMC monitoring tool that was producing about 10,000 tickets a month. Using BMC solutions, we've been able to reduce that number to approximately 100 a month. That's a huge win for us. It's our goal to cut ticket volume by 75 percent within the next 12-18 months.

The analytics capabilities in TrueSight, such as behavioral learning, are helping us reduce event noise. For example, in less than five minutes our IT operations staff can build simple application models that learn application behavior. Those models will help us reduce false alarms by up to 90 percent. Additional TrueSight analytics capabilities including probable cause analysis and log analytics will help us pinpoint and contextualize the underlying cause of events to expedite troubleshooting.

We're already beginning to see staff time savings as a result of the reduction in ticket volumes, primarily due to the fact that we are eliminating all the hours we had to spend manually closing out tickets. Traditionally, we've had to schedule someone for 10 hours every Sunday night to close those tickets. We're excited about doing away with this manual task that created no value for our business or clients.

TrueSight also brings an extra level of predictability to our environment by helping us prioritize and focus. For example, we'll know ahead of time when a database table is getting full or an application is running out of disk space. Event prioritization indexing will enable us to understand, for example, that we need to work on a particular file system before we work on another issue or problem.

Good for Us, Good for Our Clients

The Ensono holistic monitoring strategy is enabling us to deliver better service to our clients, which means they can deliver better service to their customers. That's why clients are so enthusiastic about our transformation.

Recently I met with two clients to discuss the advantages of our move to TrueSight. One, a vice president of information at a distributor of maintenance and repair products, currently employs BMC monitoring solutions. His environment is heavily ticket driven, so he's excited about the advanced capabilities for improving ticket handling efficiency. The other client, a CIO at a global services company, uses monitoring tools from another vendor and is frustrated not only by the huge flood of alerts these tools generate but also by the limited vendor support. As a result, he is excited to learn more about how advanced TrueSight capabilities can help his organization.

At Ensono, we're confident that the strategy we're putting in place, built on TrueSight Operations Management, gives us a strong competitive advantage and positions us for the future. We've been providing monitoring services for years, but now we've elevated monitoring to a frontline service that's helping us expand and grow our business.