Server and Tools

UK Customer References

Microsoft

Introduction

At Microsoft, we have been hard at work delivering an amazing amount of innovation to help you succeed in this transformational time. What we are seeing in the industry calls for a different approach. An approach that provides a comprehensive and modern platform for the worlds apps. This booklet provides you with a list of our early adopter customer references for:

Windows Server

Redefines the server category, delivering hundreds of new features and enhancements spanning virtualization, networking, storage, user experience, cloud computing, automation, and much more

Microsoft System Center

Provides a comprehensive and integrated management platform for your desktops and devices, sever infrastructure and private, public or hybrid cloud, which delivers desktop, infrastructure & application management and service delivery & automation.

Microsoft SQL Server

Cloud-ready information platform that will help unlock breakthrough insights across your organisation and quickly build solutions to extend data across on-premises and public cloud, backed by mission critical confidence.

Windows Azure

Enables you to quickly build, deploy and manage applications across a global network of Microsoft-managed datacentres in the public cloud where you can build applications using any operating system, language or tool.

For more information on the Microsoft Server and Tools products & solutions, please visit: www.microsoft.com/server-cloud.

Finally, you can view our full list of case studies at: www.microsoft.com/casestudies.

Customers


NHS
Anglia Support Partnership
BETONSOFT
Calyx
the business of transformation
Coventry University
EMI
Essex County Council
fasthosts
HRG
HOGG ROBINSON GROUP
Knight Frank
LSB
Menzies AVIATION
NETBENEFIT
miiCard
My Internet Identity
OUTSOURCERY
THE CLOUD EXPERTS
Paul Smith
robustdetails
POST OFFICE
Royal Mail
Royal Mail Group
SKIPTON
MY BUILDING SOCIETY
Unilever
VOLVO

Anglia Support Partnership

Anglia Support Partnership

www.sercoasp.com

Anglia Support Partnership wanted better business intelligence (BI) tools to help healthcare organizations in England cut costs and improve efficiency, so it implemented a solution from Microsoft and Ascribe. As a result, its clients can improve operations and adapt to healthcare reforms while keeping the focus on patient care. The solution has also improved efficiency for end users, who can access data more easily and produce reports within minutes.

Problem

In the U.K. healthcare services are identified and procured on behalf of local communities through primary care and NHS trusts. Commissioning organizations need access to both business and clinical data to monitor costs and billing practices. To support the commissioning process, ASP provides a shared informatics service, which supplies aggregated data sets from hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare providers.

The commissioners then analyze the data and generate reports. However, they often used manual processes that were time-consuming and offered limited business insight. In 2010, the government announced that most NHS commissioning activities would move from primary care trusts to groups of general practitioners. "We needed to deliver data to general practitioners and practice managers whose main role is not analyzing data," says Jeremy Lane, Data Warehouse Manager at Anglia Support Services. "They've got the far more important job of looking after patients." ASP sought an enterprise-level BI solution that would simplify access to data. Lane says, "We wanted a more automated, centralized solution so that people could find the right information more quickly."

Solution

ASP turned to Microsoft partner, Ascribe, to help design a centralized BI platform with self-service tools based on Microsoft SQL Server 2012 data management software. ASP decided to implement the Ascribe Commissioner Accelerator data warehouse and BI solution with Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Enterprise. The Ascribe platform provides the contracting and budgetary information required in the commissioning process.

ASP wanted enhanced BI tools and a database solution it could rely on. "We were already using SQL Server 2008 R2 internally, and we knew that Ascribe worked with it too," says Lane. "And with all the new BI features available, it seemed like a good opportunity to implement SQL Server 2012."

In December 2011, the ASP and Ascribe team ran a proof of concept that included SQL Server 2012 and Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 running on the Windows Server 2008 R2 operating system. The team completed the proof of concept within two weeks and was ready to deploy the solution to healthcare commissioners by February 2012.

Benefits

- Enhances Operational Efficiency.
- Improves Flexibility and Insight.
- Eases Management and Speeds Reporting.

"If you want to create a better National Health Service with less money… you need to put the right information in front of the right people. A BI solution based on SQL Server 2012 helps us do that in a managed, straightforward, and intuitive way."

Jeremy Lane
Data Warehouse Manager
Anglia Support Partnership

Bet on Soft

www.betonsoft.com

BetOnSoft develops and manages more than 110 online casino games, played every day by thousands of players worldwide. To ensure that its games are highly available BetOnSoft wanted to prepare for business growth by scaling its database while maintaining application responsiveness. In addition, its applications must perform key business-critical analytics in real time. So the company deployed a hybrid application solution that takes advantage of the high-availability features in Microsoft SQL Server 2012 AlwaysOn and the scalability of SQL Azure. Now, the company's infrastructure can exceed 10 times its previous peak loads while running intensive real-time data analytics.

Problem

To be competitive, BetOnSoft must be able to be agile and innovative in its technology approach, so it can handle rapid growth in the number of users playing its games. In fact, as the number of operators using BetOnSoft services increases, it is likely that aggressive marketing on any given day would create sudden high demand. To handle such scenarios, BetOnSoft needs the ability to rapidly scale up or down. "We have more than doubled the number of operators in the last 12 months," says Thomas Pullen, Database Administrator, BetOnSoft. "And our expectations are that we will continue to grow. We needed to make sure that our database software and servers had the capacity to scale rapidly."

BetOnSoft also sought to out-innovate its competitors by implementing rich functionality for operators and players alike, much of which depends on complex data analysis to produce results in real-time. To increase availability, scalability, and performance for its multi-terabyte database, in early 2011 BetOnSoft decided to implement a new technology solution.

Solution

In July 2011, the company implemented Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 x64 Enterprise data management software on two Dell PowerEdge R810 server computers with four 8-core processors and 256 megabytes of RAM.

In late 2011, BetOnSoft decided to upgrade further to Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Enterprise. "We had been very happy with SQL Server 2008 R2 overall," says Pullen. "But we saw features in SQL Server 2012 that we knew would help us with availability, scalability, and performance."

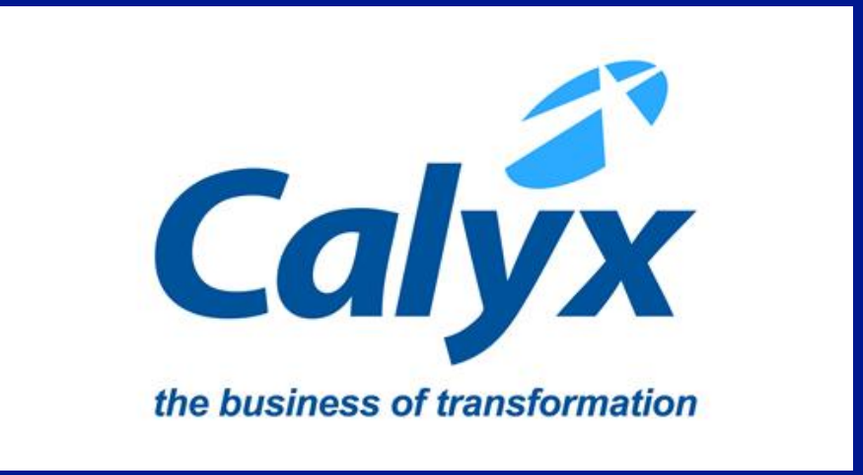
One of those features is SQL Server 2012 AlwaysOn, a new high-availability and disaster-recovery solution through which customers can query data in replica databases and conduct backup operations from those replicas. "SQL Server 2012 AlwaysOn was the key driver for us," Pullen says. "Between the availability groups, the readable mirror for offloading reporting and database checking, and the listener, we knew we would increase our availability with SQL Server 2012."

Benefits

- Processes 10 Times Previous Workload While Running Real-Time Analysis.
- Increases Availability for Mission-Critical Applications.
- Provides Hybrid IT Structure to Accommodate Scalability.
- Simplifies Administration.
- Enhances Service to Operators.

"We now have the capacity to add more players and operators while not losing any application responsiveness. If our customer base grows by 10 times, we know we'll still have great performance with SQL Server 2012 AlwaysOn."

Thomas Pullen
Database Administrator
BetOnSoft



Calyx Managed Services

www.calyxgroup.com

To support growth and provide customers with more choice in how they consume their services, Calyx Managed Services deployed the Operations Manager component of Microsoft System Center 2012, the first in a phased roll out of the Microsoft System Center 2012 suite. The solution has cut total cost of ownership through licensing, better resource allocation, and automation of critical monitoring and management tasks.

Problem

Calyx provides outsourced IT to customers across the United Kingdom (U.K.) and has offices in London, and Didsbury and Hyde in Manchester. The business is focused on medium-sized organisations, employs around 230 staff and supports more than 700 public and private sector customers from its three U.K. offices.

The firm's business strategy requires a highly flexible IT platform, and a set up that ensures it can develop, deliver, and monitor a range of services efficiently and cost-effectively. To increase agility, Calyx wanted to replace its incumbent monitoring solution in Manchester. Tim Clegg, Head of Transformation, Calyx Managed Services says: "We had a variety of tools of varying effectiveness. We wanted a solution that could provide us with a range of functions and benefits—from development to monitoring and maintenance—and support us in expanding our managed service business."

Solution

Calyx evaluated a number of proposals to find the right solution for its managed and development services strategy. "While we need a single view of network operations, we also want to provide first, second, and third-line support teams with access to the tools they need for their roles," says Clegg. Calyx engaged with specialist Microsoft System Center Partner Apajove to assist in evaluating the Microsoft System Center 2012 product set. It worked with Apajove to support the phased deployment of the suite once product selection was completed.

The Microsoft System Center 2012 suite brings together a range of modules with a common thread built around Orchestrator, a tool that supports workflow and process automation across data centres and end-user devices.

Calyx is now in the process of deploying Microsoft System Center 2012 Configuration Manager to support management of its customers' devices from the Manchester service operations centre.

Benefits

- Firm distributes resources cost-effectively.
- Calyx cuts total cost of ownership.
- Business responds rapidly to market demand.
- Operations centre supports all business lines.
- Staff develop their expertise.

"We wanted a solution that could provide us with a range of functions and benefits—from development to monitoring and maintenance—and support us in expanding our managed service business."

Tim Clegg
Head of Transformation
Calyx Managed Services

Coventry University

www.coventry.ac.uk

When the Coventry University IT team was asked to cut £1 million from its budget as part of a strategic initiative, it re-evaluated virtualisation technologies. A previous foray into virtualisation had proved to be expensive, with the team finding it a challenge to make the most of the technology. After comparing several solutions, it chose to deploy Windows Server 2008 R2 Datacenter because the licensing model immediately saved the university £129,000. The IT team is now using Hyper-V technology—included in the solution—to virtualise as many virtual machines onto one server as it needs, without requiring licences for each virtual machine.

Problem

Several years ago, the university's IT team purchased VMware licences and technology, with the goal of reducing server sprawl and centralising IT management. Stephen Booth, Head of Central Computing Services, Coventry University, says: "We'd looked at virtualisation to improve control over the network and save money through optimising our existing investments. But our VMware distribution was small scale and piecemeal, and we never fully used the technology because of the high direct costs of licensing it, coupled with minimal use of the extended feature capabilities of the product."

But, in 2010, the university moved quickly forward with its strategic plan to improve university services. As part of this, the executive management team requested that the IT department make savings of £1 million across the campus. Booth says: "We revisited virtualisation and cloud technologies because in just a few years they'd changed a lot, and there were different options available to us."

Solution

The team looked at Hyper-V, Citrix VirtualBox, and VMware, comparing each solution and evaluating the best combination of price, performance, and tools. Steve Rogers, Server Team Leader at Coventry University, says: "With Windows Server 2008 R2 Datacenter, we gained precisely the features we needed to achieve savings, standardisation, and greater control over the network." The evaluation resulted in the university choosing to deploy a virtualised infrastructure based on Windows Server 2008 R2 Datacenter and Hyper-V. "There was no question that it was the best total infrastructure solution for Coventry University," says Booth. "Not only is the licensing cost-effective, but we can also use Microsoft System Center tools to manage the infrastructure efficiently from one location."

Benefits

- University Saves £1 Million.
- IT Team Improves Business Services.
- University Reduces Ongoing Research Costs.
- End-Users Gain Better Experience.
- University Hits Carbon Savings Goal.
- IT Protects Valuable Data with Disaster Recovery Solution.

"With Windows Server 2008 R2 Datacenter, we gained precisely the features we needed to achieve savings, standardisation, and greater control over the network."

Steve Rogers
Server Team Leader
Coventry University

EMI

www.emigroup.com

Record company EMI Music wanted to integrate the large amount of information it uses—including massive consumer surveys, demographic, and partner data from companies such as iTunes—to gain a single global view for its artists. By deploying Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Fast Track Data Warehouse technology, EMI now has an accessible single source of country, consumer, and partner insight data to support decision making about the needs of consumers in 25 countries.

Problem

EMI Music is the world's fourth-largest record company in terms of market share. It manages artists and distributes CDs, digital music, ringtones, and merchandise. The firm operates in 25 countries through three regional divisions, including the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The music company has a wealth of complex information from both internal and external sources, but, until recently, decision makers were unable to exploit the value of this "Big Data" store. David Boyle, Senior Vice President of Insight, EMI, was determined to launch a suite of projects to derive value from the data and generate insight in three key areas: County data, consumer data and partner data.

Boyle says: "The overall solution is split into the three key insight areas, but the primary objective was to unify all the information into one consistent subject area. We wanted it to be easily accessible to every EMI decision maker in 25 countries."

Solution

EMI deployed Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Fast Track Data Warehouse based on an HP hardware platform. The solution presents users with data, visualisations, and insights through Microsoft SharePoint technology and desktop business intelligence (BI) tools. Microsoft Gold Partner for business intelligence Adatis implemented the solution using SQL Server 2012 Fast Track Data Warehouse best practice methodology.

EMI decided to process the data into Microsoft SQL Server 2012 data management software using SQL Server Integration Services and SQL Server Analysis Services cubes—both Multidimensional and Tabular, the new model introduced in SQL Server 2012.

Sacha Tomey, Owner and Director, Adatis, says: "Adatis was the ideal Microsoft Partner because of its role as an early adopter of SQL Server 2012 technology, domain knowledge, and specialism in best practice BI methodologies."

Benefits

- Firm gets global insight.
- EMI gains single source of information.
- Data warehouse unifies disparate information across the business.
- Partner helps improve performance and manageability.
- Company promotes global music industry through innovation.

"In the early days, we made great progress with Excel Services. But to meet the massive demands of the business, we had to shift focus. With Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Fast Track Data Warehouse, our users can access the business data they need using standard Microsoft desktop tools."

David Boyle
Senior Vice President of Insight
EMI

Essex County Council

www.essex.gov.uk

Part of Essex County Council, Target Tracker develops software for schools. Its Primary Target Tracker application—which provides information to support learning—ran on Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software. To stay ahead of its competitors, Target Tracker rebuilt the solution using SQL Database in Windows Azure. The firm now has an application that scales to meet the needs of thousands of schools in England and overseas.

Problem

More than 2,000 schools in the U.K. have adopted the Primary Target Tracker solution. This helps them to support each child's learning with the right teaching, and identify issues or trends in the classroom. It provides access to critical information, such as teacher assessment and test results.

Schools are subject to regular and vigorous inspection by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). Green says: "Primary Target Tracker helps schools meet Ofsted requirements to understand children's progress and quickly identify and resolve any gaps in learning."

Darren Cole, Project Manager, Target Tracker, Essex County Council, says that the organisation has always sought to be highly innovative in its use of technology. This, and an increase in market competition, inspired it to re-develop Primary Target Tracker, which ran on Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software. Cole says: "Each school's data was stored locally, so users needed to carry information on memory sticks if they wanted to access it outside the school. We wanted to update our application to reflect the very latest in IT—the use of the cloud to store data."

Solution

The Target Tracker team considered a few different options, including Amazon Web Services, but found they couldn't meet the application's exact needs. The organisation turned to Windows Azure SQL Database, a cloud database service built on SQL Server technologies. With it, companies can scale to multiple databases quickly and easily, while paying only for what they use. Cole says: "We chose to develop Primary Target Tracker on Windows Azure because it manages rapid changes in demand and we don't have to introduce expensive servers in-house that remain idle for long periods of time." Windows Azure is a managed service, saving Cole and his small team of 25 the time-consuming tasks of installing, updating, or maintaining hardware and software.

Most schools using Primary Target Tracker now run the new SQL Database version. For these schools, data is held in the cloud. The Microsoft .NET Framework 4 client application offers an intuitive interface based on familiar Microsoft Office tools, and information is presented graphically, making it easy for users to interpret, add to, or share with colleagues.

Benefits

- Scalable system supports rapid growth.
- Cloud solution accelerates setup.
- Managed solution keeps costs down.
- Trusted technology drives new business.
- Data availability is assured.

"With Primary Target Tracker storing more than 150 million individual assessments in the cloud, teaching staff can quickly and securely access critical data from any location."

David Wilde
Chief Information Officer
Essex County Council

Fasthosts

www.fasthosts.co.uk

Fasthosts is a fast-growing UK hosting provider that has expanded due to its focus on offering better and more economical services than its competition. To continue to stay in front, Fasthosts is upgrading to Windows Server 2012. It will take advantage of new features, such as storage migration, Hyper-V Replica, and "shared nothing" live migration, that will simplify data center administration and increase availability. Fasthosts will be able to offer several new services based on Windows Server 2012 capabilities that will generate new revenues. It can also improve availability by managing customer workloads with more flexibility.

Problem

Fasthosts focuses on the mainstream hosting market, selling directly to end customers and also through an extensive partner channel network. In July 2010, Fasthosts launched a virtual private server offering (dedicated servers running as virtual machines) using the Hyper-V technology in the Windows Server 2008 R2 operating system. Within two years, the company was serving thousands of customers on an infrastructure of 4,000 virtual machines running on 12 16-node clusters.

Fasthosts also used Microsoft System Center data center solutions to automate much of the management of the environment. However, Fasthosts still had to manually manage and monitor host server workloads, as it felt that System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008 R2 was too cautious in virtual machine placement.

Solution

Because it had thousands of servers running Windows Server 2008 R2, Fasthosts was closely watching its successor, the Windows Server 2012 operating system. "We were really interested to find out what would be in Windows Server 2012, particularly in the new version of Hyper-V," says Lee Harrison, Lead Virtualization and Storage Engineer on the Infrastructure Team at Fasthosts. "The more we heard about it, the more excited I became. The new version of Hyper-V offered us the scalability and flexibility that we needed."

Fasthosts joined the Microsoft Rapid Deployment Program (RDP) and created a proof-of-concept environment by using a Dell M1000e Blade Chassis populated with Dell PowerEdge M610 blade servers. It used a NetApp FAS6280 storage system and the Cisco Catalyst 4948 switch for server switching within the rack. "We did a lengthy storage review and the NetApp relationship with Microsoft was key in our decision to select NetApp," Harrison says. "Good vendor communication is key in resolving support issues."

Benefits

- Boost IT Efficiency and Business Agility.
- Reduce Costs Internally and for Customers.
- Create New Revenue Opportunities.

"With the many new features in Windows server 2012, we can create richer services that generate revenue. There's a real opportunity to 'productize' the Hyper-V Replica feature, for example, to offer a 'replication as a service' offering."

Jonathon Royle
Chief Technology Officer,
Fasthosts

Hogg Robinson Group

www.hrgworldwide.com

Hogg Robinson wanted to extend its core travel platform to work seamlessly on mobile devices. It created a mobile version of its application using Windows Azure—including Cloud Services, Service Bus, and SQL Database—to deliver travel information and booking services to mobile users. The company has already saved up to 80 per cent in start-up costs and improved the development team's productivity by 25 per cent with Windows Azure.

Problem

Based in the UK, Hogg Robinson provides corporate travel booking services to customers worldwide. To deliver its services, Hogg Robinson integrates systems and data from third-party suppliers, customer business systems, and in-house software, using Microsoft BizTalk Server 2010 Enterprise. The software creates a connection layer between the web, mobile, and desktop applications that comprise its core platform. Customer data is always protected behind either the company or customer firewalls.

With the increasing popularity of smartphones and tablet PCs, it was important for Hogg Robinson to extend its platform to mobile devices. Paul Saggar, Director of Technology and Product Development, Hogg Robinson, says: "Most customers need to access booking services while they're travelling, so we wanted to develop a mobile version of our solution." But to deliver its services on mobile devices, Hogg Robinson needed to address scalability, performance, and security challenges.

Solution

Saggar and his team created the HRG i-Suite mobile application incorporating a mobile gateway based on Windows Azure. No personally identifiable information is stored on the device. The gateway uses Cloud Services, Service Bus, and SQL Database to create a hybrid solution comprising cloud and on-premises services. Some functionality is delivered directly from the cloud, while a reliable and secure message and relay infrastructure connects information from the on-premises booking platform to Cloud Services.

Jon Simpson, Technical Architect, Hogg Robinson, says: "Using Cloud Services and delegating frequently accessed data to SQL Database helps us deliver excellent performance through the HRG i-Suite mobile application, regardless of user location."

Several corporate customers are currently piloting the HRG i-Suite mobile solution, and the development team is taking advantage of the scalability and flexibility of Cloud Services to reduce the time and complexity of development.

Benefits

- Development lead time is 25 per cent faster.
- CAPEX is reduced by up to 80 per cent.
- Remote performance and security are increased.
- Service innovation is enhanced.

"The team has increased productivity by about 25 per cent for projects that use or are hosted on Windows Azure, and we're already starting on phase two of our mobile strategy. This is testimony to how quickly we can develop and extend services with the cloud platform."

Paul Saggar
Director of Technology and Product Development, Hogg Robinson

Knight Frank

www.knightfrank.co.uk

Global property consultancy Knight Frank wanted to enhance client service by helping its experts successfully combine geospatial data with other sources of information. In 2012, it upgraded its existing data management software to Microsoft SQL Server 2012, and combined this with use of Bing Maps for Enterprise. The firm has already seen an increase in productivity, with new application development time reduced from months to weeks.

Problem

Knight Frank, which is headquartered in London, is a leading independent global property consultancy, which relies on geospatial data to run its business. However, its London residential development team found it difficult to share geospatial data with both internal and external sources. Adam Siejka, Database Development Manager, Knight Frank, says: "Geospatial support is a key concern for us because we deal with properties and use both external and mobile applications."

Until recently, the company's knowledge about residential development opportunities was gathered from local authorities' town planning information, combined with the firm's own data. It used manual processes, which were often inconsistent. The needs of the London residential development team corresponded with a review at Knight Frank of its existing data management software. The firm wanted to improve mobile working, ease collaboration, and guarantee always-on data availability.

Joseph Megkousoglou, Lead Software Architect, Knight Frank, considered several alternatives to upgrading the existing Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 deployments, including Oracle.

Working with Microsoft Partner itelligence, Knight Frank upgraded to Microsoft SQL Server 2012. The advanced integration, reporting, and analysis capabilities—combined with Bing Maps for Enterprise—provided the platform for building a reporting and analysis tool for the London residential development team. Andy Steer, Director—Business Analytics, intelligence, says: "The Knight Frank team operates only within the M25, but the intention was to build a proof of concept capable of reuse for other teams, applications, and websites. We produced a solution based on Microsoft SQL Server 2012 within 15 days."

The first step in this process was to develop an application based on Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 Enterprise, to give access to rich data on residential development opportunities in London. Steer says: "The interface for both internal data capture and initial analysis within the solution is delivered by SharePoint Server 2010, with dynamic maps provided by Bing Maps for Enterprise."

Benefits

- Development time for external websites cut from months to weeks.
- Speed, accuracy, and efficiency bolster service to customers.
- AlwaysOn feature in SQL Server 2012 ensures high availability.
- Microsoft Partner delivers knowledge transfer to in-house developers.

"The new features in Microsoft SQL Server 2012 will help us develop external websites and applications in weeks rather than months."

Adam Siejka
Database Development Manager
Knight Frank

LSB

www.laseda.es

LSB needed to improve support across its globally distributed IT infrastructure. It selected Microsoft Partner Apajove to extend Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager across all sites and devices, as well as implement a multilanguage Windows 7 Enterprise "zero-touch" installation solution. As a result, the firm has cut licensing and antimalware costs, and enhanced standardisation, support, and performance.

Problem

LSB faced a number of challenges incorporating newly acquired businesses and modernising its IT infrastructure. To do this, it required a new approach to support and the provision of services—joining together disparate processes and tools, and standardising on a single, global service desk.

Solution

Softcat is the European large account reseller for LSB, managing its Microsoft Enterprise Agreement. And, as the Softcat preferred partner for Microsoft System Center, Apajove was selected to design, plan, and implement the solution. LSB was already using System Center Configuration Manager to provide inventory and software distribution to some of the business. Apajove worked with LSB operations personnel in Germany to extend System Center Configuration Manager across all sites and devices. Apajove also implemented a multilanguage Windows 7 Enterprise zero-touch installation solution to accelerate the adoption of the Windows 7 operating system and Forefront Endpoint Protection across the estate.

LSB had a Lotus Notes-based incident-management solution, which was no longer considered fit for purpose, so Apajove implemented Microsoft System Center Service Manager to provide incident and change management. System Center Service Manager integrates tightly with other elements of the infrastructure. It provides a seamless configuration management database experience for service-desk staff and a significantly improved experience for end users. Previously, all incidents were raised through email, resulting in compliance and accuracy issues. This approach has been replaced with the System Center Service Manager Portal rendered in Microsoft SharePoint 2010, through which users complete a form to raise an incident.

Apajove deployed Microsoft System Center Operations Manager to provide operational monitoring of the distributed LSB infrastructure. All servers at all LSB sites across the world now submit telemetry and health status to a central console, giving the operations and support teams insight into the performance and availability of servers, services, and applications.

Benefits

- Existing service-desk licensing savings
- Existing malware solution savings.
- Deployment time improvements.
- Toolset rationalisation.
- Foundation for future.

"Standardising on System Center has allowed us to remove many point-solution products from the environment driving standardisation, supportability, performance and availability"

Craig Dixon
Corporate IT Director
LSB

Menzies Aviation

www.menziesaviation.com

Menzies Aviation is a global provider of passenger, ramp, and cargo handling services. Its rapid global expansion through business acquisitions contributed to an increasing number of employees and devices, a growing amount of data, and a complex network—complicating employee authentication, identity, and information access management. Menzies Aviation deployed Windows Server 2012 so that IT staff can use its centralized, flexible tools to build an easily managed employee identity framework. The company can easily control employee access to file data, enhance data security, and achieve compliance—all from its two, U.K.based data centers.

Problem

Menzies Aviation is now a major force in the international ground handling industry. Operating at more than 132 airports in 34 countries and supported by a global team of more than 17,000 people, Menzies Aviation serves more than 500 airline customers that handle more than 800,000 flights and 1.7 million tons of cargo annually.

Maintaining the flexible, reliable, and secure IT infrastructure that is necessary to support the company's global operations is an ongoing challenge. Menzies Aviation worked with longtime partner Dell, a member of the Microsoft Partner Network, to complete the data center project in 2007 and improve business continuity and customer service level agreements. Together, there are 300 Dell PowerEdge 2950, R710, and R720 servers across the two data centers. Menzies Aviation uses a Cisco network and an EqualLogic storage solution. Menzies Aviation maintains a VMware-based virtualized environment that includes 350 virtual machines that run mission-critical business systems.

Solution

Menzies Aviation sought to centrally manage employee identity and access to information based on business and compliance needs. It chose the Identity and Access Management scenario in the RDP so that IT staff can benefit from improvements to Active Directory and the introduction of Dynamic Access Control, a file-system authorization mechanism.

"Why the RDP? There is always pressure to reduce costs," says Apps. "At the same time, service quality, customer safety, and data security are all paramount. The RDP gives us the ability to test the latest operating system from Microsoft and see how we can use it to reduce costs without impacting service or safety. Dell has been our technology partner for 10 years now, so we were excited to participate. We were able to work closely with Microsoft, which has been a great experience."

IT staff also like the simplified licensing that comes with a Microsoft solution. "The licensing is amazing," says Apps. "It's another reason that I can see us moving to Hyper-V across the infrastructure. We get more value out of every pound we spend on IT."

Benefits

- Improves Identity and Access Management to Boost Security.
- Increases Business Agility to Support Growth.
- Simplifies IT Platform.

"We have a lot of data across the globe, but with Active Directory and Dynamic Access Control, we can make sure the right people get access to the right data and help keep our information secure."

Alan Yin
Senior Engineer,
Enterprise Systems Team
Menzies Aviation

NetBenefit

www.netbenefit.com

NetBenefit is a managed hosting provider in the UK that continuously refreshes its technology to stay competitive. It recently upgraded to Microsoft System Center 2012 so that it could meet demand for its public and private cloud offerings and continue to reduce costs. Because it embraced cloud computing, NetBenefit has been able to trim data center costs—including power consumption—by 40 percent and pass those savings on to customers. It can also meet customer needs faster.

Problem

NetBenefit specializes in providing tailored managed hosting solutions that deliver security, resilience, and online performance for business-critical websites, applications, and online advertising campaigns. NetBenefit is headquartered in London and is part of Group NBT LTD.

In 2008, NetBenefit deployed the Windows Server 2008 R2 operating system with the Hyper-V virtualization technology and began to virtualize its physical servers to reduce costs and expand its offerings. By using Hyper-V, NetBenefit was able to add an entry-level virtual offering to its managed hosting services. The company used Microsoft System Center data center solutions, particularly Microsoft System Center Virtual Machine Manager, to efficiently manage both physical servers and virtual machines.

In 2009, NetBenefit used the same suite of Microsoft software to create its first cloud computing offerings, offering both public and private cloud environments. The virtual server and cloud offerings were a success with customers, so much so that the NetBenefit IT staff had a difficult time keeping up with demand.

Solution

In January 2011, NetBenefit joined the Technology Adoption Program for Microsoft System Center 2012 Virtual Machine Manager, an upgrade designed specifically for creating and managing private cloud environments. It also supports clustering of Virtual Machine Manager instances.

"Upgrading to System Center 2012 was another sign of our commitment to Microsoft as our chief cloud computing partner," Green says. "We have both commercial and technical reasons for partnering with Microsoft for our cloud endeavours. On the business side, Microsoft licensing is far simpler than VMware licensing. If we had a VMware platform, we would have to charge customers a fee for every virtual machine. With Windows Server 2008 R2 Datacenter, the host operating system license covers the licensing for every virtual machine on the server."

Benefits

- Data Center Costs Reduced by 40 Percent.
- Lower Costs for Customers.
- Higher Availability of Cloud Environment.
- Customer Needs Met Five Times Faster.
- Faster Business Growth.

"NetBenefit wants to be a niche provider of premium virtualization and cloud services, and with System Center 2012, we have the tools we need to reach our goal."

Michael Green
Senior Product Manager
Managed Hosting
NetBenefit

miicard

www.miicard.com

Online identity-as-a-service (IDaaS) provider miiCard (My Internet Identity Card) wanted a secure platform to allow customers to prove their identity online in just a few minutes. It is using Windows Azure to power its service, increase competitiveness, and offer a global service to an industry that demands resilience and scalability. Customers in nine countries already use miiCard, which can support 100,000, or 10 million users as required.

Problem

Founded in 2011 and based in Scotland, miiCard is the first global platform for real-time online identity verification to Level of Assurance 3 (LOA 3) that complies with anti-money laundering and "Know Your Customer" standards.

With both the risk and value of web transactions increasing, miiCard has developed a way to prove identity purely online. James Varga, Chief Executive Officer, miiCard, says: "miiCard brings trust to the Internet and control of our online identities.

As a small team with a global proposition, miiCard knew it had to do something different to succeed in an industry traditionally dominated by large IT companies. Using a cloud-based platform-as-a-service (PaaS) model rapidly emerged as the best option. Varga says: "We needed to take a fresh approach. It wasn't enough to copy a relational database and port it over to the cloud—we had to design it for the cloud with a highly reliable, secure, and scalable solution."

Solution

miiCard chose Windows Azure for the IDaaS offering because its developers could take a new approach to supporting the demands of the Internet. Initially, miiCard considered using Amazon Web Services, but decided that Microsoft offered the best value proposition with high availability, security, and scalability.

Varga says: "It is the Microsoft approach to cloud computing that makes this possible and has changed the way we build software. Administrators no longer face the challenges of load balancing, failover, resource planning, and scaling. We just build it and it works."

As a startup, miiCard qualified for support through Microsoft BizSpark—a global programme that helps software startups succeed. It gives them access to Microsoft software development tools, connecting them with key industry players, including investors. miiCard also has a Windows Azure Enterprise Agreement, which helps the company compete and scale globally without the need for expensive physical infrastructure.

Benefits

- Windows Azure offers miiCard competitive advantage
- miiCard revalidates identities every night, easing compliance.
- Cloud-based IDaaS frees developers to create strong user experiences.
- Windows Azure offers fast time to market.
- Microsoft helps startup face future challenges.

"Windows Azure offers us scalability, resilience, and flexibility. This means that as a startup we can compete in an environment dominated by large systems integrators and technology companies.""

James Varga
Chief Executive Officer
miiCard

OUTSOURCERY®
THE CLOUD EXPERTS

Outsourcery

www.outsourcery.co.uk

To help change its business model from a traditional web hosting company to a cloud services provider, Outsourcery is taking advantage of the latest improvements in the Windows Server 2012 operating system and Hyper-V virtualization technology. No longer hampered by a four-core-per-virtual-machine limit, Outsourcery can accommodate partners and customers that demand high-performance virtual machines. Data center administrators are running 67 percent more virtual machines per server. Administrators can build an eight-node Windows Server 2012 Hyper-V cluster in just a few hours instead of a week, and they can perform simultaneous live migrations 10 times faster than before. Outsourcery expects to save more than £50,000 a year in IT costs as well as growing its business.

Problem

Outsourcery provides a broad range of cloud offerings, including hosted software applications, virtualized infrastructure, and unified communications solutions. They are a member of the Microsoft Partner Network with four Gold competencies, and also a member of the Presidents Club, an elite group of strategic partners whose sales achievements rank them as the highest in the Microsoft Dynamics global partner network.

Recently, Outsourcery took a step forward in its strategic plans to expand its existing cloud services to include a larger portfolio of next-generation cloud products. From the perspective of a cloud service provider, public cloud computing incorporates the automated and on-demand delegation of compute, storage, and networking resources to partners and their customers as needed through a shared physical infrastructure maintained by the cloud provider.

Solution

Outsourcery chose to focus on a specific scenario within the RDP that concentrated on Hyper-V density and scale. This scenario introduces enhancements in the Windows Server 2012 hypervisor that Outsourcery can use to increase the density of virtual machines per host server through an improved architecture and better support tools. Windows Server 2012 supports virtual machines with up to 64 virtual processors and 1 terabyte of memory and clusters with as many as 64 nodes.

"We joined the RDP because we are interested in new technology and in being on the leading-edge of IT developments. We love the feedback and involvement from Microsoft in learning about and shaping a new product," says Germain. "The scenario made sense to us because it is aimed at service providers, and it focuses on increasing platform density. We want to reduce our capital outlay on hardware and gain more density from our platform, so it was perfect."

Benefits

- Increases Density, Promotes Business Growth.
- Lowers Costs.
- Improves Agility, Customer Service.

"With Windows Server 2012, the list goes on as to how we can use it to increase our business.... We can't wait until we are fully deployed."

Dan Germain
Director of Hosting Infrastructure
Outsourcery

Paul Smith

www.paulsmith.co.uk

British fashion designer Paul Smith wanted to expand its virtualized environment and embrace cloud computing to further increase efficiencies and contain costs. It used Windows Server 2012 and Hyper-V to virtualize business-critical applications—and achieved a 10 percent improvement in their performance. Data center administrators can run almost triple the amount of virtual machines per server and provision new servers in a day, instead of four weeks. Paul Smith expects to virtualize 30 percent more of its servers by the end of 2012 and to save more than £840,000 (US$1.8 million) a year in IT costs.

Problem

The Paul Smith IT department consists of 15 people who support the business on a global scale from the Nottingham head office. "Our core business has more than 1,200 employees and from an IT perspective our team is relatively small for the services we provide to the business," says Lee Bingham, Head of IT at Paul Smith.

From its inception, Paul Smith has worked with Risual, a member of the Microsoft Partner Network with Gold competencies, to build a cost-effective, interoperable IT infrastructure that delivers real business value. To that end, the company has standardized on Microsoft technologies. "Aligning our business with Microsoft and working with Risual has been an extremely successful strategy," says Bingham. "While we have made great progress with optimizing our data centers, and the level of service that IT delivers to the business is already high, we are always interested in the latest technologies to improve efficiency, lower costs, and better serve the business."

Solution

In March 2012, Paul Smith joined the Rapid Deployment Program (RDP) for the Windows Server 2012 operating system. The company wanted to use the more flexible and powerful virtualization technologies within Windows Server 2012 to improve IT service to the business, realize cost savings, and boost operational efficiencies. Paul Smith IT staff members worked with Risual to evaluate Hyper-V in Windows Server 2012 and work out a strategy to transform the data centers into a cloud platform capable of supporting large, high-performance virtual machines.

"The RDP was a perfect way for Paul Smith to see how the latest version of Windows Server could help them take their virtualization plans to the next level," says Proud. "The new version of Hyper-V has capabilities and features that Paul Smith can use to increase the density and performance of virtual machines per server. It also has better memory management capabilities and efficient tools to further optimize their data centers and reduce administration overhead."

Benefits

- Created Scalable Virtualization Platform.
- Increased Performance by 10 Percent.
- Increased Density by Almost 200 Percent.
- Reduced Costs by $1.8 Million in First Year.
- Improved Business Agility, Innovation.

"We are using Windows Server 2012 to gain a high-density, scalable environment that's easier to manage. Now we can save time in the data center and focus on supporting strategic business goals."

Lee Bingham
Head of IT, Paul Smith

Robust Details

www.robustdetails.com

Robust Details Limited (RDL) found it challenging to expand the business and add new services for customers because of the limitations of its manual systems. It wanted to give customers the ability to complete assessments and get certificates online. Microsoft Partner Black Marble built a solution using Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Windows Azure, and Microsoft Silverlight to keep track of customer records, automate processes, and store documents online. With the secure, scalable solution, processes are now more efficient and customers can access services online.

Problem

Through its Robust Details Certification Scheme, RDL offers house builders a means of demonstrating compliance with minimum sound insulation standards. This is the firm's core business and it applies to separating walls and floors between dwellings.

RDL was piloting a new certification service under the government's Code for Sustainable Homes scheme, which involved checking and certifying assessments carried out by RDL-licensed assessors. It was a heavily paper-based process that also relied on spreadsheets and databases. John Thompson, Finance Manager, Robust Details Limited, says: "We'd dug ourselves into a hole. We just couldn't scale the business to offer new products and services without increasing bureaucracy. The system was holding the business back."

Thompson wanted to give his customers the tools to interact with the company digitally, cutting out the paperwork. However, the nine-person organisation didn't have a large IT infrastructure or in-house IT staff, so any computer-based solution had to be easy to maintain.

Solution

Black Marble—a Windows Azure Circle Member in the Microsoft Partner Network, recommended a solution that combined:

- On-premises Microsoft Dynamics CRM, with workflow and reporting services
- A website hosted on Windows Azure with a shopping cart and authentication using Access Control so customers can pay for the services online
- Blob storage to store customers' PDF files which when printed can run to hundreds of pages per site
- A secure web service to allow communication between the Windows Azure hosted website and Microsoft Dynamics CRM using the Service Bus
- A Microsoft Silverlight interface that lets customers self-serve on their PCs.

This combination of on-premises Microsoft Dynamics CRM and Windows Azure gives RDL customers the information they need to work effectively and allows them to interact with the company directly through their computers, with fewer paper-based processes and data rekeying.

Benefits

- Enhanced security
- Better scalability.
- Increased simplicity.

"With Microsoft Dynamics CRM, the company now has a cutting-edge customer relationship management tool. It'll help me target customers and build my business."

John Thompson
Finance Manager
Robust Details Limited

Royal Mail Group

www.royalmailgroup.com

Royal Mail Group wanted to upgrade its 27,000 computers to the Windows 7 operating system. However, the cost-conscious organization wanted a way to streamline and automate the mostly manual, time-consuming, and disruptive deployment process. Royal Mail Group worked with CSC, a member of the Microsoft Partner Network, and implemented the Microsoft System Center 2012 family of products to automate system management tasks, including software updates, system monitoring, and virtual machine provisioning. In addition, Royal Mail Group implemented a private cloud storage solution for data backup, which is built on Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V. As a result, they expect to reduce desktop support costs by 20 percent while increasing IT efficiency, enhance IT security, and improve the user experience.

Problem

Royal Mail Group has always been cost-conscious, facilitating some of the lowest postal rates in the UK; however, it wanted to be even more diligent about IT costs as it prepared to privatize the organization. Specifically, Royal Mail Group wanted to reduce software licensing costs, IT resource costs, and costs associated with technology impacts to its employees. To reduce costs and limit its dependency on physical hardware, Royal Mail Group implemented VMware to run several of its business-critical applications, such as SAP software. In 2010, after the release of the Windows Server 2008 R2 Datacenter operating system with Hyper-V technology, they also implemented the Microsoft virtualization platform. With more than 600 servers in the data center and three servers each at 116 remote sites, the organization knew that a more aggressive approach to virtualization could further increase its cost savings.

Solution

In May 2011, Royal Mail Group engaged technology partner CSC, a member of the Microsoft Partner Network, to find a way to better manage its disparate IT environment and make IT business operations more efficient, particularly in preparation for the planned upgrade to Windows 7. Together, the companies decided to launch a large-scale project with the following technology goals:

- Implement Microsoft System Center 2012 as its system management solution, specifically to enable automated, unattended operating system deployment, manage desktops, provision virtual machines, monitor systems, and automate IT workflows.
- Build a private cloud storage solution that would help improve the user experience for data backup and enhance data security.
- Expand the Hyper-V virtualization environment at Royal Mail Group to better take advantage of the organization's Microsoft Enterprise Agreement.

Benefits

- Reduces Desktop Support Costs up to 20 Percent.
- Increases IT Efficiency.
- Enhances IT Security—Desktops and Data.
- Improves User Experience for Employees.

"We expect that, by using Configuration Manager combined with our private cloud storage solution, we will be able to save 15 to 20 percent annually in desktop support costs alone."

Karl Snowden
Infrastructure Manager,
Desktop and Networks
Royal Mail Group

Skipton Building Society

www.skipton.co.uk

Skipton Building Society needed a self-service portal for development environments for its mortgage services division HML. Its IT Shared Service Centre was tasked with finding a solution that would allow HML to provision virtual machines to keep pace with its agile development requirement. By deploying Hyper-V virtualisation technology, along with the Microsoft System Center 2012 suite of products, the firm avoided a £42,000 expenditure on a proof of concept and licences from the incumbent vendor.

Problem

Skipton Building Society, the fourth-largest building society in the UK, was looking for ways to streamline and accelerate the deployment of new business services through cloud computing. David Miskell, Solutions Architect, Skipton IT Shared Service Centre, says: "With a mainly manual process, it would have taken our team three weeks to deploy new service requests, but HML needed a faster process." Around 80 per cent of the server estate in the Skipton IT Shared Service Centre is virtualised. Miskell says there would have been an extra cost of around £42,000 for deploying the capability required by HML from the incumbent vendor's technology. Ongoing costs would also have risen as the solution was scaled up.

The Skipton IT Shared Service Centre had established a strong working relationship with Microsoft and Microsoft Partner, Risual. Miskell says: "We took the view that with its latest releases of Microsoft System Center 2012, the Microsoft offering had matured significantly. But we still required peace of mind that the product would achieve the business goals we'd set out for the project."

Solution

The Skipton IT Shared Service Centre decided to use Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V and the Microsoft System Center 2012 suite of products. Craig Hartwell, Commercial Sales Director, Risual, says: "We first engaged with the Skipton IT Shared Service Centre to assist the team with making savings and increasing automation in its data-centre environment. We then worked on providing a solution that would deliver the self-service portal project and reduce time to market to deliver new services."

Risual made a high-level proposal to deliver a self-service capability using Hyper-V technology with the Virtual Machine Manager and App Controller components of Microsoft System Center 2012. Hartwell says: "A vital distinction was that Microsoft didn't charge the customer for the proof of concept, whereas the incumbent supplier asked for £12,000."

Benefits

- Skipton gains agility with virtualisation solution.
- Firm saves £42,000.
- High-level advice helps make best use of existing Microsoft licences.
- Skipton looks forward to lower long-term management costs for the entire virtualised server estate.

"In addition to the technology aspect, we chose the Microsoft solution because it was cost-effective and presented a lower risk as there was no cost associated with delivering the proof of concept."

David Miskell
Solutions Architect
Skipton IT Shared Service Centre

Unilever

www.unilever.com

Unilever expects to double in size in 10 years and to ensure that its IT organization could support this growth, Unilever worked with Avanade to migrate from VMware to Hyper-V technology in Windows Server 2008 R2. It then used Hyper-V and Microsoft System Center 2012 to create a private cloud environment that contains 3,175 virtual machines. With its private cloud, Unilever will deliver IT services 40 percent faster and be more agile in the marketplace. It also expects to achieve its growth goals with no increase in IT costs. By eliminating hundreds of servers, Unilever realized significant savings and became a better environmental citizen. It is upgrading to Windows Server 2012 to gain even more IT efficiency.

Problem

In 2008, Unilever began virtualizing servers by using VMware ESX software and reduced its physical servers by 65 percent. However, VMware was too expensive to proceed with. Meanwhile, Unilever closely tracked the progress of Microsoft virtualization software, and in late 2009 engaged Avanade to create a proof of concept around migrating to the Hyper-V technology in the Windows Server 2008 R2 operating system. The business case for moving to Hyper-V focused on increasing data center consolidation, extending virtualization to remote office locations, and reducing management costs.

The proof of concept was a success, and between 2009 and 2011, Avanade used its Next Generation Datacenter model and Migration Factory methodology to migrate most Unilever VMware virtual machines to Hyper-V and converted hundreds of physical servers to Hyper-V virtual machines.

Solution

In January 2012, Unilever again engaged Avanade, this time to help it explore private cloud computing—a pool of virtualized server, storage, and networking resources that dynamically flex to accommodate ever-changing business needs, and is dedicated to the use of a single organization. "When you put Microsoft System Center 2012 and the Windows Server 2012 operating system together, you have a really good story to tell in terms of cloud management," says Garry Meaburn, Operational Effectiveness and Tooling Manager, IT Infrastructure Services, at Unilever. "We suddenly saw a way to do rapid deployment, automation, and orchestration of IT services."

Windows Server 2012 is a cloud-optimized operating system, and Microsoft System Center 2012 is a cloud management platform, with virtual server creation, monitoring, and management integrated in one tool set and console

Benefits

- Speed IT Service Delivery by 40 Percent, Move Faster in the Marketplace.
- Double Company Size without Increasing IT Costs.
- Reduce Server Costs and Environmental Consequences.
- Deliver IT Resources as Needed with Hybrid Cloud Model.

"With a Microsoft private cloud infrastructure, we can provide IT at a lower cost and provide IT capacity faster. In short, we can react faster, which helps the business react faster"

Mike Royle
Director of Enterprise Computing
Unilever

Volvo

www.volvocars.com

When Volvo Car Corporation split off from Ford in 2010, it needed to develop its own stand-alone IT environment in some areas. At the same time, the company wanted to improve its business intelligence (BI) capabilities and operational efficiency. So Volvo decided to prototype a Microsoft data management solution that simplifies its IT environment, provides graphical self-service reporting capabilities, and improves collaboration.

Problem

By the time that Zhejiang Geely Holding Group completed its acquisition of Volvo Car Corporation in 2010, the IT environment at Volvo had become complex, difficult to manage, and expensive. Over the years, a variety of data management and business intelligence products had been deployed. Volvo wanted to reduce the number of these products to make the overall system easier to manage and to reduce licensing and other costs."

Volvo also wanted to improve its business intelligence capabilities to achieve greater insights into such things as assembly and product development costs and to help employees produce reports more quickly and easily.

To ensure timeliness and accuracy and to foster collaboration, Volvo sought to improve data management. The company has relied on IT personnel to generate many data reports, which can be slow and inefficient. Also, there is no central location for storing reports, so information often is distributed by sending a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet or other attachment in an email message.

Solution

To address these challenges, Volvo is deploying a pilot solution based on Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Business Intelligence data management software and related BI technologies, including Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 and Microsoft Office 2010. One of the big reasons for choosing Microsoft is that Microsoft products are designed to work well together. "We strive to keep down the number of technologies, and since Microsoft ensures the interoperability of those applications, we don't have to worry about that," says a Volvo IT architect.

Volvo also is implementing the new Power View feature in SQL Server 2012 Reporting Services. Power View is a self-service reporting tool that helps data consumers visually explore their data themselves and answer ad-hoc questions with ease. The new system includes a SharePoint portal where people can access and use the tools and information they need and collaborate with fellow employees. Volvo expects that it will gradually implement the new system for up to 5,000 users, dramatically increasing the number of Volvo employees who will be able to make data-driven decisions.

Benefits

- Simpler IT and Reduced Costs
- Better Business Intelligence
- Richer Collaboration

"With SQL Server 2012 and SharePoint Server 2010, we can use one technology and have one place to get information, so there's a lot of time saved—and money."

Business Analyst
Volvo

Case Studies

Microsoft