Case Study: Visibility Europe Limited

Systems management is an essential task. From routine housekeeping to resolving unexpected problems, it often takes longer than necessary. But by introducing sophisticated remote monitoring technology, the whole process is greatly simplified. Thanks to the Assure24 service, Visibility Europe Limited has cut costs, reduced systems issues, and improved customer service.

Visibility Corporation is a US-based enterprise software and technical services company with its European headquarters in Altrincham, Cheshire. Visibility Europe Limited offers solutions to help organizations get the most from their information systems. It specialises in enterprise applications for manufacturers, reporting and analytics, application development, and municipal systems management solutions. One of the company's customers is the Office of the Public Works (OPW) in Dublin. The 174-year old organization is responsible for the restoration and preservation of state buildings. It runs Visibility 7 enterprise software on an HP system with Microsoft .NET technology and an Oracle database. 30-minute daily system checks were carried out remotely as part of a comprehensive customer support contract.

"We were logging in from Altrincham once a day and checking a number of parameters - the disk space, Oracle database quotas and so forth," said General Manager Mark Thornton. "It was labour intensive, time-consuming, and a poor use of a valuable resource to do manual tasks."

Although a high level of service was provided for the customer, this came at a price for Visibility Europe Limited. Expensive technical resources were tied down by mundane checking. For example, 80 percent of the time was spent diagnosing calls to find that 80 percent of problems were unrelated to the application software. Costs were rising sharply and technical staff felt increasingly de-motivated.
A presentation by Assure4 of its remote monitoring service then changed the picture. Thornton immediately saw that

Assure24 would cut support costs, automate system checks, and free valuable staff for more demanding tasks. A long and successful working relationship with Assure24 also gave him great confidence.

"It was an easy decision to make. Assure24 was particularly open to suggestions as how their product could be developed to benefit us now and in the future with additional functionality," said Thornton.

Implementation swiftly followed with the help of an Assure24 developer. Existing manual checks were programmed into Assure24 and a software agent installed in Dublin. The Assure24 web portal was branded for Visibility Europe Limited. The portal provides an end-
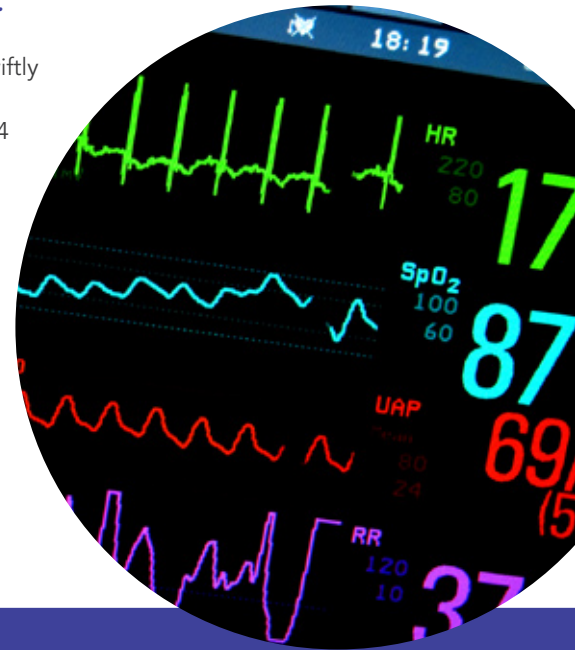
Assure24 can streamline and add efficiency to support businesses so that more customers can be handled with the same number of staff. It's all about moving from a reactive support business to a proactive support business to provide a better customer service. What's more, the Assure24 service can be turned on more or less immediately without the need to invest in new infrastructure.

Anthony Molloy, Partner Services Practice Manager, Assure24

user view into application, database, operating system, and hardware. It took just three working days to set up OPW's new service.

The Assure24 server now runs checks on the OPW system every 30 seconds. Network, system, and application monitoring offers event and performance checking via a secure agent. Users have a centralised web browser view of online events and performance. Assure24 also goes one step further by reporting against service level agreements. If a check fails, Visibility Europe Limited staff are alerted by e-mail to take remedial action.

"The only thing that OPW see is an e-mail telling them there is a problem. They also get a monthly report showing them we have complied with the SLA," said Thornton. "With the new software I can guarantee their system is being checked continually."

Assure24 has not only cut Visibility Europe Limited's workload and costs but also given OPW a much higher level of service. While the latter was not a primary objective, the new-found ability to monitor many different elements simultaneously often gives this beneficial result. Assure24 can check operating system, middleware, databases, web servers, and applications as well as firewalls, routers, switches, and hubs.
The solution is seen by the customer as a 'black box' but without the need to manage the box constantly. Real-time, proactive monitoring easily detects issues with disk space, Oracle quotas or back-up tapes waiting to be loaded. Technicians in Altrincham can now log in to cancel rogue jobs before they crash the system or remind operators to load back-up tapes.
Performance information is consolidated, correlated, and presented in a partner-branded portal. By measuring against acceptable threshold values - set by the service level agreement - out-of-value checks are notified by e-mail and included in monthly reporting. Assure24 is a subscription-based service that requires no new investment in skills, people, or infrastructure. It has also allowed Visibility Europe Limited staff to spend more time on revenue-earning opportunities.

"The Assure24 service has reduced our costs by removing the necessity to have a technical person logging on each day. It has also enabled us to provide a better service to OPW," said Thornton.

Visibility Europe Limited is now offering Assure24 to more of its customers as a useful additional service. Given the positive experiences with the Office of Public Works, the company is also constantly developing the service to include more checks. And as Assure24 is capable of rapid deployment, Visibility Europe Limited has gained a useful competitive edge.

About Assure24 partner services

Assure24 partner services is the leading channel-only IT services organisation in the UK, providing technology integration, relocation services, infrastructure consultancy, remote monitoring services, education & training and telephone support services to over 300 business partners

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