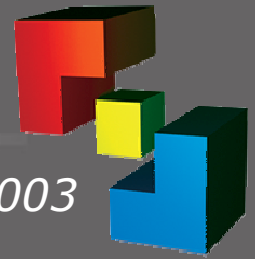


Case Study

The Dress Barn, Inc.

Systems Management Server (SMS) 2003



THE
HENSON[®]
GROUP

dressbarn

Project Vitals

Industry: Specialty Retailer

Customer Profile: Based in Suffern, NY, Dress Barn is one of the nation's leading women's specialty retailers offering quality career and casual fashion apparel at value prices, operating 792 stores in 45 states.

Business Situation: As a publicly traded company, Dress Barn is obviously sensitive to the perceptions of investors, regulators, and analysts and takes even nominal threats very seriously. Therefore, when it commissioned an IT security assessment and subsequently learned of the potential for security breaches in its IT infrastructure, it immediately set about exploring remedies.

Solution: THG designed a single-site deployment of SMS 2003 to accommodate 500 desktops.

Results: THG's solution achieved the functionality Dress Barn required, providing a centralized resource for patch management and distribution. This solution now enables Dress Barn to identify and distribute relevant patches across a variety of platforms and ensure the security and regulatory compliance of its environment.

Award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner **The Henson Group, Inc. (THG)** designed and deployed a highly customized solution, based on Microsoft's Systems Management Server 2003 (SMS), to provide client The Dress Barn, Inc. (Dress Barn) more stability and security for its desktop computing environment.

BUSINESS SITUATION

Headquartered in Suffern, NY, Dress Barn is one of the nation's leading women's specialty retailers offering quality career and casual fashion apparel at value prices, operating 792 stores in 45 states.

As a publicly traded company, Dress Barn is obviously sensitive to the perceptions of investors, regulators, and analysts and takes even nominal threats very seriously. Therefore, when it commissioned an IT security assessment and subsequently learned of the potential for security breaches in its IT infrastructure, it immediately set about exploring possible remedies.

Specifically, the audit revealed that one of the deficiencies that needed addressing was a lack of a software patching methodology for Dress Barn's desktops that could possibly expose the company to possible disruption in its financial reporting process. *(It should be emphasized that no actual security breaches or resulting disruptions ever occurred.)*

To proactively address this shortcoming, Dress Barn expressed its interest to Microsoft in implementing a Microsoft Systems Management Server 2003 (SMS) solution that provides patch and application management and distribution throughout its operations.

SMS delivers enterprise-class change and configuration management for Windows servers and desktops, as well as other mission-critical enterprise systems. When properly implemented, SMS 2003 significantly reduces software deployment costs and provides the timely release of software patches to enhance system security. Possessing Microsoft's official Advanced Infrastructure Solutions Competency and designated as a "Go To" Gold Certified Partner for SMS 2003 deployments, THG was an ideal consultancy to provide Dress Barn with unique insight on SMS 2003 and its many nuances, usually known only by Microsoft veterans.

SOLUTION

To proactively address its shortcoming in software patch management, Dress Barn expressed its interest to Microsoft in implementing an SMS 2003 solution that provides patch and application management and distribution throughout its operations. To provide the expert SMS 2003 architectural and instructional services to meet Dress Barn's unique needs, THG drew on thousands of hours of SMS designing and deployment experience. As part of this process, THG implemented a methodology that identified key objectives throughout the deployment process.



For Dress Barn, THG designed a single-site deployment of SMS 2003 to accommodate 500 desktops. To execute this plan, detailed discovery was conducted to form a comprehensive understanding of Dress Barn's current network architecture, server implementation, client Operating Systems, and Dress Barn's needs and objectives.

Subsequently, THG initiated the project with a full-day of comprehensive instruction and knowledge transfer regarding all relevant facets of SMS 2003 to ensure that Dress Barn understood the terms and definitions of SMS 2003.

This involved documenting the geographic locations of Dress Barn's organizational sites, including information about international Operating System, languages, time zones, and any other such considerations pertaining to functionality that needs to be demonstrated during the deployment.

Based on information gathered during Discovery, THG provided Dress Barn with a document that detailed the logical and physical implementation of the custom SMS 2003 Deployment solution. With this extensive information gathered and analyzed, THG specialists configured the SMS 2003 Central Site and additional sites.

During this process, Dress Barn IT professionals were instructed on the deployment process so that they can effectively deploy to the remaining sites.

In addition to the continuous knowledge transfer THG provided to Dress Barn's IT professionals throughout the entire deployment, one day was dedicated to training Dress Barn administrators on effectively using the SMS 2003 console, including a dedicated section on "packaging."

RESULTS

THG's solution achieved the functionality Dress Barn required, providing a centralized resource for patch management and distribution. This solution now enables Dress Barn to identify and distribute relevant patches across a variety of platforms and ensure the security and regulatory compliance of its environment.

Dress Barn's SMS 2003 solution also leverages standard Microsoft security tools like the Microsoft Baseline Security Inventory Analyzer and Office Update Inventory tool. This is used to inventory systems for applicable patches and vulnerabilities and centrally stores this information which is used to provide comprehensive web reports tracking vulnerabilities and patch deployment, as well as how and when these have been addressed.

Rather than manually creating a software patch deployment, Dress Barn administrators use the Patch Distribution Wizard, which steps them through the whole process.

And, the wizard can also automatically download the latest patches from the Microsoft website using Windows Update technology, reducing operational costs for repackaging and allowing the enterprise to remain current with all the latest patches and hotfixes from Microsoft.

About The Henson Group



Founded: June, 2000

Headquarters: New York City

Consultants: 37 (including both full-time and part-time professionals)

Partners: MS, HP, IBM, Cisco, Avicode, Dell, EMC, eXc Software, K2.net, Netscaler, Network Engines

Certifications: Microsoft Gold Certified and Cisco Certified

Official Microsoft Competencies:
Advanced Infrastructure Solutions
Information Worker Solutions
Integrated E-Business Solutions
Learning Solutions
Networking Infrastructure Solutions

History: Founded by former Microsoft employees from the development teams in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services

Consultants: All MS Certified, most former Microsoft engineers, and each have a minimum of three years of vertical-specific experience

Annual Client-Retention Rate:
(2000 through 2004) 98%

Annual Client-base Growth:
(2000 through 2004) 50%

Company Description: THG is an award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner specializing in deploying Microsoft technologies for U.S. and international companies across 20 industry categories.

Founded by former Microsoft employees from the development groups in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services, THG offers clients direct access to Microsoft's product groups and technical information often not publicly available.

THG's competencies include .NET application development, infrastructure deployments, Line-Of-Business solutions, security, product training, and strategic consulting.

Delivering projects in a fraction of the time it takes competitors, THG's proprietary project management process and attention to detail consistently produces a 98% client-retention rate.

Everywhere clients need THG to be, the consultancy has operations, engineers, and partners located in countries around the world that are committed to the highest level of client satisfaction.

To learn more about THG, please visit www.HensonGroup.com. For more information on how THG can deploy this type of solution in your environment, please call 800.980.1130 or e-mail Info@HensonGroup.com.

The Henson Group, Inc. 1375 Broadway, Third Floor New York, N.Y. 10018

www.HensonGroup.com (800) 980 1130 Info@HensonGroup.com

New York • New Jersey • Connecticut • Pennsylvania • Massachusetts • Florida • Texas • Illinois • California • Washington, D.C.