



## US REAL ESTATE GIANT LOOKS TO THG FOR SOLUTION TO MONITOR WINDOWS INFRASTRUCTURE

*Microsoft System Center Operations Manager 2007 Deployment*

*“This deployment was significant as The Henson Group showcased its experience in Operations Management and Project Management to achieve the client’s expectations, despite a significant change in delivery time”*

Dipendra Bantawa, Senior Consultant – Project Lead, The Henson Group, Inc.

Microsoft Gold Certified Partner The Henson Group, Inc. (THG) designed and implemented a highly customized server monitoring solution based on System Center Operations Manager 2007 to centralize monitoring functions for Kimco Realty Corp.

### **BUSINESS SITUATION**

Kimco Realty Corp. (Kimco), a real estate investment trust (REIT), owns and operates the nation's largest portfolio of neighborhood and community shopping centers. As of June 30, 2007, the company owned interests in 1,519 properties comprising 180 million square feet of leasable space across 45 states, Puerto Rico, Canada, Mexico and Chile.

Publicly traded on the NYSE under the symbol KIM and included in the S&P 500 Index, the company has specialized in shopping center acquisitions, development and management for more than 45 years.

*(For further information about this client, visit the company's web site at [www.kimcorealty.com](http://www.kimcorealty.com).)*

Kimco has a centralized IT department comprised of approximately 13 people, charged with the responsibility of managing and optimizing the IT infrastructure and supporting people who use it. Managing the distributed and heterogeneous mix of IT back-end systems, while maintaining optimal level of IT service, is very challenging for Kimco’s IT department.

Without system management product like System Operations Manager 2007 (Operations Manager 2007), the goals were nearly impossible to attain. Considering the scope of Kimco’s operations, the organization realized it could benefit greatly from implementing a customized solution for centralized monitoring of its IT infrastructure.

Operations Manager 2007, out-of-the-box, provides infrastructure management, monitoring for anomalies, and an array of tools and tips for diagnosing and troubleshooting problems of both Microsoft and non-Microsoft products from a central location. These features — coupled with rich knowledge embedded in the product — allow IT resources to identify issues and rapidly solve them before they become bigger problems and cause disruptions. For this reason, Operations Manager 2007 offered the potential

### **Overview**

#### **COUNTRY/REGION**

United States

#### **INDUSTRY**

Real Estate

#### **CUSTOMER PROFILE**

Kimco Realty, a real estate investment trust (REIT), owns and operates the nation's largest portfolio of neighborhood and community shopping centers.

#### **BUSINESS SITUATION**

Without a solution in place for monitoring its Windows environment, Kimco’s centralized IT department was in a perpetual reactive stance to respond and recover when issues arose.

#### **SOLUTION**

The Henson Group designed and deployed a solution based on Microsoft Systems Center Operations Manager 2007.

#### **RESULTS & BENEFITS**

The Henson Group achieved Kimco’s expectations for implementing a solution to provide Kimco with monitoring of all of its Windows servers and network devices on the intranet, remote sites, and DMZ.



*What this meant for Kimco was that The Henson Group had the resources, project experience, industry knowledge, and proven technical ability to achieve its objectives.*

to not only provide monitoring capabilities, but take monitoring to the next level and enable Kimco to gear towards becoming more proactive, as opposed to its current reactive state.

Operations Manager 2007 is the third generation of Microsoft's award-winning monitoring solution. Operations Manager 2007 builds on the success of its predecessors by adding key features and functionality that customers and the market have been demanding.

The distributed nature of today's applications challenges traditional server event and performance monitoring tools. Operations Manager 2007 allows an administrator to graphically define the components that make up a service. Once the service model is defined, services are managed like any other device. Events can be monitored, performance can be tracked, and overall health can be viewed and reported on. Services can also be combined to allow monitoring of more complex services that are made up of different sub-services.

Therefore, Kimco approached Microsoft to explore the possibility of leveraging Operations Manager 2007. To design and deploy a solution to monitor Kimco's unique server environment, Microsoft tapped The Henson Group. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner founded by former Microsoft engineers from the product groups in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services, the consultancy is officially designated as an exclusive "Go To" partner for Operations Manager 2007 (and previously Microsoft Operations Manager 2005) engagements.

The Henson Group offers a full-service Systems Management unit staffed by experienced Microsoft Certified consultants, usually specializing in multiple technologies.

The Henson Group is consistently ranked at or near the top of Microsoft's partner community for Microsoft Certified Partners for Systems Management Projects for both Operations Manager 2007 and Systems Center Configuration Manager.

And, The Henson Group achieved Microsoft's official Advanced Infrastructure Solutions competency for proven experience deploying the Microsoft systems management software family of products, including Systems Center.

What this meant for Kimco was that The Henson Group had the resources, project experience, industry knowledge, and proven technical ability to achieve its objectives.

### **SOLUTION**

Kimco's environment encompassed approximately 50+ servers and more than 100 network devices. Though Kimco ultimately intends to consolidate the server environment, the Operations Manager 2007 solution was designed to manage the parameters of the current environment, while also be easily able to accommodate changes and facilitate growth.

This engagement was initiated with a Discovery Phase, during which time key IT executives at Kimco were interviewed to explore their expectations for this deployment. This phase was crucial for The Henson Group's team to identify

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the size and complexity of the network and how it was distributed, as well as for the team to itemize key IT pain points.

Subsequently, The Henson Group customized the solution design to accommodate the existing hardware. The Henson Group provided recommendations as to what the optimal deployment scenario was before ultimately achieving approval to gain a clear path for implementation.

The Henson Group's team then installed the core components for Ops Manager 2007. Since, Kimco did not have any dedicated DBAs (data base administrators), this phase also required The Henson Group to assist in the installation of SQL Server and SQL Reporting Services.

For this engagement, The Henson Group designed a solution to include a single management group with agent failover, as opposed to multiple management groups with multi-homed agents or multi-tiered management groups.

A management group consists of an Operations Manager 2007 Database, an Operations Manager 2007 Root Management Server, the Operations Manager 2007 Operator Console and managed computers. Optionally, a management group can include the Operations Manager 2007 Reporting Server, an additional Management Server, and an Operations Manager 2007 Web Console.

*(If you have less than 250 computers to manage, you can accomplish this by installing all Operations Manager 2007 components on a single computer. However, this design is not scalable, will not provide optimal performance and will not provide high availability.)*

The Henson Group also deployed a variety of optional components (such as Web Console, Reporting and third-party connectors) and several Microsoft-authored Management Packs.

The Henson Group identified and downloaded other Management Packs to accommodate Kimco's requests for functionality and deployed agents on Windows Servers and network devices (to monitor availability) in both DMZ and non-DMZ networks.

*(In computer security, a demilitarized zone (DMZ), more appropriately known as demarcation zone, or perimeter network is a network area (a subnetwork) that sits between an organization's internal network and an external network, usually the Internet. The point of a DMZ is that connections from the internal and the external network to the DMZ are permitted, whereas connections from the DMZ are only permitted to the external network — hosts in the DMZ may not connect to the internal network.)*

The installation phase was followed by a customization phase, during which Synthetic Transaction rules were created to monitor key websites. Overrides were created for rules/monitors as a part of fine tuning. And, custom tasks were created to provide efficient use of the operator console.

Lastly, during the Handover and Commissioning Phase, The Henson Group delivered one-on-one Knowledge Transfer with key senior stakeholders, training necessary to provide subsequent instruction to other Kimco IT staffers.

*"...once Kimco administrators gain more experience with the product, they will be able to optimize the configuration, taking Kimco to the next monitoring maturity level."*

*Dipendra Bantawa, THG*

One of the requirements for the commissioning phase was the completion of Network Operations Center (NOC) type diagram view for the purpose of mapping the health of the entire Kimco servers and network devices.

This allowed CIO and other IT executives to quickly see the health of IT infrastructure without knowing much about Operations Manager 2007.

### **BENEFITS & RESULTS**

The Henson Group achieved Kimco's expectations for implementing a solution to provide Kimco with monitoring of all of its Windows servers and network devices on the intranet, remote sites, and DMZ.

This solution affords monitoring of key business critical applications, the synthetic transaction capability to add client perspective to the typical server monitoring capabilities, and provides monitoring of all servers with a centralized Network Operations Center (NOC) type diagram that depicts the health of entire Kimco infrastructure.

The solution provides Kimco with the rich health knowledge of all Windows-based applications, as the Management Packs are developed by the application developer

All the monitoring capabilities mentioned above will enable Kimco administrators to assume a more proactive stance. Essentially, they will now be alerted of problems before a Help Desk call arrives.

"In many respects, this approach is still reactive, though once Kimco administrators gain more experience with the product, they will be able to optimize the configuration, taking Kimco to the next monitoring maturity level," Bantawa says. "Kimco will focus on the availability portion of monitoring, then move to performance, and then to configuration and security."

The solution also provides much better management focused on a few of the ITIL specific processes – Incident Management, Problem Management, Knowledge Management, and Configuration Management. (*The Information Technology Infrastructure Library is a framework of best practice approaches intended to facilitate the delivery of high quality information technology services.*)

"Kimco's business processes are heavily dependent on IT," Bantawa says "Therefore, availability of the IT services and the means to check and balance is very crucial and Operations Manager 2007 now fills this gap."

Meanwhile, another area that Operations Manager 2007 will help in measuring and alerting poor performance of the IT services. This solution will help Kimco to become more efficient by more effectively uncovering root causes for issues and identifying a path for resolving them.

"The features and ability to manage the IT components were beyond what the client expected," Bantawa says. "Role-based security was another feature they liked, which would help them to tailor the access to the Ops Mgr 2007, as who can see what and do what on the objects they see."



Lastly, this project was concluded well within time and budget, with THG achieving all objectives, even though the project duration was cut down to more than half from the original Project Scope.

#### About The Henson Group

A Microsoft 2007 Partner of the Year, The Henson Group is a "Gold Certified Partner" founded by former Microsoft engineers in 2002, specializing in enterprise deployments and .NET development of Microsoft products that overcome today's business challenges.

The preferred solution provider for many US and international corporations, The Henson Group leverages direct ties to the Microsoft product groups, is a preferred sub-contractor of Microsoft Consulting Services, holds a seat on the national Microsoft Partner Advisory Council, and is recognized among the top US consultancies in Microsoft's partner community (Microsoft's "Solution Finder").

Moving forward, with the solution in full production, Kimco today is working with The Henson Group to plan the addition of the following functionality:

- Audit Collection Service
- Evaluate eXc MPs to monitor network devices, VMWare infrastructure, AS 400, Linux OS
- Secure Vantage MP to monitor security and potentially to monitor group policies

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