



Overview

Country or Region: United States
Industry: Media Advertising

Customer Profile

News America Marketing® (“NAM”) offer advertisers a broad portfolio of in-store, home-delivered and online media that helps brands stand out in today’s cluttered marketplace.

Business Situation

With the introduction of Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS 2007) in 2006, TPG-Axon sought to migrate from SharePoint Portal Server 2003 to leverage the latest features of SharePoint, while also seeking custom functionality.

Solution

News Marketing America sought not only to secure enhanced functionality for the applications deployed in the desktop environment, but enhancing the actual processes that govern how the technology is applied in this environment.

Results & Benefits

The Henson Group successfully achieved the client’s objectives related to Zero-Touch Desktop Deployment strategy, incorporating new methodologies for deploying Windows Vista and the Office 2007 application suite with fewer resources than ever before.

MAJOR MEDIA SERVICES COMPANY LOOKS TO THE HENSON GROUP TO ASSIST IN RESHAPING ITS DESKTOP ENVIRONMENT

NEWS AMERICA MARKETING (A NEWS CORPORATION COMPANY)

Microsoft Business Desktop Deployment (BDD) Design, Planning, & Training

Microsoft Windows Vista

Microsoft Office 2007

Microsoft Desktop Deployment Planning Services (DDPS)

“We are starting to reap the rewards of Vista by leveraging the ZTI [Zero-Touch] processes. We would not be where we are today without [The Henson Group’s] assistance, leadership and knowledge. We can now effectively and efficiently deploy desktop software to our entire user base across multiple hardware platforms with virtually no interaction from support staff.”

— Alfred McBean, Chief Technology Officer, News America Marketing

Microsoft Gold Certified Partner The Henson Group, Inc. (THG) provided a comprehensive program (incl. planning, architecture, implementation, customization, support, and training) that enabled News America Marketing to re-envision its desktop environment.

BUSINESS SITUATION

News America Marketing® (“NAM”) offer advertisers a broad portfolio of in-store, home-delivered and online media that helps brands stand out in today’s cluttered marketplace. Its powerful advertising and promotion programs—united under the SmartSource® brand name—are relied upon by the country’s largest packaged goods manufacturers for their unparalleled consumer reach.

News America Marketing is a subsidiary of News Corporation, one of the world’s largest media and entertainment companies. News America Marketing’s sister companies include: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Fox Broadcasting Company, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., New York Post, and MySpace.

(For more information on this THG client, please visit: [http://www.newsamerica.com/.](http://www.newsamerica.com/))

Considering the scope of NAM’s operations, the organization has a complex information technology infrastructure, based



Impressed by many of the new features offered by Vista and envisioning the productivity gains that could be realized by implementing the new OS in NAM's environment, McBean decided to further explore deploying Vista across the enterprise.

largely on Microsoft's technology products. As such, NAM is constantly and proactively seeking ways to improve its IT systems and applications.

Shortly after the early 2007 market debut of Microsoft Windows Vista, NAM's Chief Technology Officer Alfred McBean installed Microsoft's latest desktop operating system (OS) on a company PC to perform his own evaluation.

Impressed by many of the new features offered by Vista and envisioning the productivity gains that could be realized by implementing the new OS in NAM's environment, McBean decided to further explore deploying Vista across the enterprise.

At the time, NAM was preparing for a schedule "refresh" of its desktop environment, including updates to hardware and software. This process, though, was primarily manual based.

Considering the availability of not only Vista, but Microsoft Office 2007, also introduced in January 2007 — as well as the necessity to implement a more seamless, automated deployment methodology — McBean began to explore the capabilities of Microsoft's Business Desktop Deployment (BDD) tools and technologies. Essentially, McBean and his team were interested not only in securing enhanced functionality for the applications deployed in the desktop environment, but enhancing the actual processes that govern how the technology is applied in this environment.

Subsequently, during an expanded internal evaluation of Vista and Office 2007, NAM expressed interest to Microsoft in reviewing and improving its deployment processes and possibly implementing BDD protocols, to determine if new Microsoft tools and software could be utilized.

Enter The Henson Group ("THG"). 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 desktop 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").

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The Henson Group currently offers a Microsoft Management Technologies Practice designed to provide expert-level services focused on the application of a core set of Microsoft technology products for managing Windows systems and infrastructures. This practice area focuses on such technologies as BDD tools, Microsoft Systems Center Operations Manager (previously Microsoft Operations Manager), Systems Center Configuration Manager (previously Systems Management Server), and other technologies designed to optimize business desktop deployments and ensure the highest ROI for clients committed to the Microsoft platform.

THG's Microsoft Management Technologies Practice also reflects the scope and spirit of its participation in Microsoft's Dynamic Systems Initiative (DSI) and the focus on the effective management of enterprise IT systems.

This initiative unifies hardware, software and service vendors around a software architecture that enables customers to harness the power of industry-standard hardware, and brings simplicity, automation and flexibility to IT operations. The new breed of dynamic systems enabled by this software promises to streamline IT operations and lower costs for the enterprise datacenter and make datacenter capabilities accessible to a much broader array of businesses. The unifying software architecture centers on a System Definition Model (SDM) that provides a common contract between development, deployment, and operations across the IT life cycle.

As this ideology applies to NAM, advancements in gaining efficiencies in desktop deployment strategies are integral to DSI, while support for the architecture and SDM also can be expected in future releases of the Visual Studio developer tools, Microsoft server applications and management solutions.

To provide the actual services for NAM, formulate a deployment strategy, and deliver knowledge transfer and training, The Henson Group provided Microsoft Certified Systems Engineers (MCSE), many former Microsoft employees, specializing in staging, tuning, testing, and configuration services; planning, architecting, creating, maintaining, and testing corporate images; and packaging applications and provisioning images to new users and machines.

The consultancy also possesses both Microsoft's official Advanced Infrastructure Solutions Competency and the Networking Infrastructure Solutions Competency, is formally designated as a Microsoft Deployment Service Partners (DSP) in two categories (East Region and Enterprise Partner), and is a member of Microsoft's Mid-Market Desktop Deployment Program.

DDPS provides the fundamental analysis, business case, process, and technical procedures you need to execute a comprehensive desktop deployment project.

Furthermore, underscoring Microsoft's confidence in The Henson Group and dedication to encouraging NAM to authorize the joint Vista/Office 2007 upgrade, which represented substantial licensing fees, Microsoft decided to invest in subsidizing the deployment services.

SOLUTION

During preliminary exploration of NAM's objectives, The Henson Group recommended the client leverage the Desktop Deployment Planning Services (DDPS) subsidies it already possessed as a component of the Software Assurance benefits package it purchased with its Microsoft licenses.

The Henson Group is one of a select number of Microsoft Gold Certified Partners officially authorized to accept the Software Assurance vouchers customers purchase when licensing Microsoft products.

DDPS programs represent 1 to 15 days of deployment planning services, based on the amount of Microsoft Software Assurance purchased on Microsoft Office software. This service introduces the most advanced techniques, processes, and tools to your company. The services you receive are based on your unique needs to help you achieve the most cost-effective desktop environment.

DDPS provides the fundamental analysis, business case, process, and technical procedures you need to execute a comprehensive desktop deployment project. Delivered by The Henson Group, these services help you extend the business value of your Microsoft SharePoint, Microsoft Office, or Microsoft Windows software upgrade.

Each interactive session of DDPS is collaborative, comprehensive, and based on best practices directly from Microsoft. For each DDPS, a dedicated THG Microsoft Certified Consultant creates a blueprint, providing the following services:

Preflight Conference Call and Questionnaire

The Henson Group, a qualified provider in the Office System Solutions Directory, will work with you to understand your business imperatives and existing environment, enabling us to deliver a customized deployment plan.

Engagement Summary and Recommendations

You will receive a comprehensive summary of the information from your session, provided by The Henson Group. It will include specific information, challenges, links, tools, and best practices to assist you with formulating a valid Solution Framework for your desktop deployment project.

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Cost Model Summaries

These summaries include different scenarios based on your pricing and infrastructure needs.

Proof-of-Concepts Lab

The 5-, 10-, and 15-day offerings will include a proof-of-concepts lab. If you choose the 10- or 15-day offering, this lab will be left for you to use after the session.

While DDPS offers a wealth of options, McBean had a definitive idea as to what he expected from this project.

Basically, DDPS is a services program, not a marketing subsidy play, which means The Henson Group is mandated to file architectural design documentation with Microsoft.

“However, when I first arrived at NAM, Mr. McBean did not see the value of the DDPS program and was focused almost exclusively on achieving ZTI [Zero-Touch Deployment],” says Michael Baiano, THG Principal Consultant and Project Lead.

The Zero Touch solution is based on the Microsoft Solution Accelerator for Business Desktop Deployment and Zero Touch best practices from Microsoft. With the Zero Touch solution, network and desktop administrators can automate the deployment process, reducing cost and errors.

“I walked in the door with a DDPS strategy and he wanted to walk me right out,” Baiano adds. “I was able to get Mr. McBean to give me one hour to convince his team of the value of DDPS and if they weren’t convinced, I would gladly leave. Needless to say, an hour later, they were all convinced.”

In regards to the environment, the majority of this infrastructure included laptops/desktops that were running Microsoft Windows XP Professional with SP1 and Office 2003.

Up to that point, NAM focused the majority of desktop deployment efforts on two main tasks: fulfilling 1) New Hire PC Build Requests; and 2) Existing Hire PC Rebuild Requests. As such, NAM followed the BDD process below:

For new hires, a series of remedy tickets were opened and assigned to the corresponding groups for hardware provisioning, AD and systems access, mail box, and applications. The tickets issued emails to the responsible parties and remain open until closed by the owner.

The typical duration to perform a bare-metal desktop build for a new hire or perform a desktop refresh for an existing hire was approximately 1.5 hours.

“Since I had years of experience in desktop deployment, management, and software packaging with several major US and international companies, I felt confident that my unique perspective would help NAM achieve their goals of streamlining their BDD processes.”

During its evaluation of Office 2007 and search for new Microsoft tools and software with the potential to enhance its BDD processes, NAM sought to achieve the following:

- 1) Comply with an internal mandate to achieve ZTI, in advance of its desktop re-fresh, bypassing the normal process of application compatibility testing and normal deployment change control.
- 2) Ascertain what processes, tools, and/or software could NAM implement in the long term (4-12 Months) to significantly improve its BDD practices.

To successfully execute the deliverables detailed in a formal proposal delivered to NAM and Microsoft, The Henson Group drew upon thousands of hours of BDD design and deployment experience.

“I was truly excited to have the opportunity to work with a client of NAM’s caliber,” Baino says. “Since I had years of experience in desktop deployment, management, and software packaging with several major US and international companies, I felt confident that my unique perspective would help NAM achieve their goals of streamlining their BDD processes.”

As part of this process, The Henson Group implemented a methodology that identified key objectives early in the deployment process. Additionally, key decision-making milestones were scheduled at critical stages throughout the project cycle, ensuring that NAM’s executives had opportunities to weigh and approve important decisions.

Critical to the success of this engagement was enabling NAM to take advantage of new technologies that simplify and streamline desktop deployment. For several years now, Microsoft has been investing substantially in developing what is now known as zero-touch deployment technologies. Zero Touch technology is designed to significantly reduce the cost of deploying and maintaining the business desktop across an organization.

The business desktop is defined as the corporate standard computing platform consisting of the Windows Operating System (OS) and core productivity applications such as Microsoft Office plus other line-of-business applications.

Essentially, zero touch technology is a collection of tools and best practices that utilize existing solutions and methodologies — including, but not limited to, Microsoft Systems Management Server (SMS), Microsoft Operations Manager, Microsoft SQL Server, Sysprep, User State Migration Tool (USMT), and the SMS OS Deployment Feature Pack for disk imaging to enable OS deployment, refresh, and desktop replacement operations with little or no user input required.

“The Solution Accelerator for Business Desktop Deployment is an excellent resource for NAM, because it represents the collective body of knowledge, tools, and best practices distilled from deploying literally hundreds of thousands of systems by thousands of organizations around the globe of all sizes and scopes.”

Microsoft subsequently released this technology, along with prescriptive guidance based upon ITIL and MOF deployment best practices, as the Solution Accelerator for BDD.

BDD — or deploying Microsoft Windows, Office, and other applications to client computers — is an essential task for organizations of all sizes. Using the tools and guidance contained in the BDD Solution Accelerator, business desktops can be deployed using several methods depending on the number of client systems involved, available infrastructure, and skill level of IT staff.

“The Solution Accelerator for Business Desktop Deployment is an excellent resource for NAM, because it represents the collective body of knowledge, tools, and best practices distilled from deploying literally hundreds of thousands of systems by thousands of organizations around the globe of all sizes and scopes,” explains THG’s Baiano, a Microsoft-trained and certified desktop deployment specialist.

“Microsoft really listened to its customers, to understand and help alleviate their pain points around BDD with the end goal of reducing the time and cost of deployment and ensuring that organizations derive maximum benefit from their Microsoft solution,” Baiano adds. “This free but incredibly valuable prescriptive guidance clearly demonstrates Microsoft’s commitment to driving down the cost and complexity of BDD.”

In smaller organizations, the business desktop is typically deployed in a Lite-Touch scenario, referring to a hands-on, CD-based installation or purchase of systems with OEM versions of the operating system and applications already installed.

In larger organizations, such as NAM, more advanced deployment processes and technologies can simplify and automate deployment; provide for remote configuration and management; and streamline disaster recovery.

In this scenario, human intervention can be virtually eliminated by leveraging Zero-Touch deployment methodology. By combining technologies such as Systems Center/MOM/SMS with the Operating System Deployment (OSD) Feature Pack and BizTalk Server, business desktop deployments, replacements, and refreshes can take minutes instead of hours and cost a hundred dollars per workstation instead of a thousand or more.

The methods and tools chosen depend on the organization’s current state of IT maturity. From an Infrastructure Optimization perspective, environments for the business desktop fall into three primary categories: limited, basic, and well-managed.

NAM falls into the category of a well-managed environment, typically including the infrastructure needed to take advantage

As NAM learned, the tools and resources provided in the Microsoft Solution Accelerator for Business Desktop Deployment Enterprise Edition provide an excellent framework for highly-automated Lite - Touch deployment or fully automated, zero-touch deployment.

of more automated deployment options, generally needed to reduce the time, cost, and effort of desktop deployment as much as possible.

As NAM learned, the tools and resources provided in the Microsoft Solution Accelerator for Business Desktop Deployment Enterprise Edition provide an excellent framework for highly-automated Lite -Touch deployment or fully automated, zero-touch deployment.

During the initial phase of this engagement, dubbed Application Test Lab Development, Discovery was conducted to provide a detailed assessment of the current infrastructure and software. Current software compatibility testing and deployment methodologies were investigated to gain full and detailed understanding of the current software environment.

On completion of a Discovery project phase, THG and NAM met to review the Discovery findings, explore concerns and, if needed, revise the project timeline. A Discovery Summary Email, including final timeline, was developed and presented.

During the Development phase, THG developed a customized an Application Compatibility Test Lab solution to assist NAM in conducting automated, repeatable, efficient application compatibility testing with specific emphasis on the deployment and interoperability of an Office 2007 productivity application suite. Specific tools and methodologies, including the Application Compatibility Toolkit, were recommended including the use of automated testing and deployment tools in a virtualized lab environment.

RESULTS & BENEFITS

Throughout the DDPS program, including delivery of a Microsoft-approved Architecture document, ultimately through deployment, The Henson Group exceeded NAM's expectations for devising a deployment methodology, while Microsoft was satisfied that a key client opportunity was realized with the assistance of an experienced Microsoft Gold Certified Partner.

Specifically, as part of this engagement, The Henson Group provided a three-day on-site DDPS program to perform discovery and provide training and a customized deployment plan to facilitate desktop deployment of Windows Vista and Office 2007.

The Henson Group's strategy also achieved NAM's objectives related to Zero-Touch Desktop Deployment strategy, incorporating new methodologies for deploying Windows Vista and the Office 2007 application suite with fewer resources than ever before.

During the DDPS program, THG demonstrated how NAM could quickly make key high-level desktop deployment design

“Previously, this would have required a complete manual deployment, leveraging a ghost-based solution and manual installation of all software apps, which was a costly, time-consuming, heavy-touch process, which required a technician to individually address every desktop.”

decisions that lead to a successful Windows operating system and Office 2007 deployment strategies using the Zero Touch solution.

The Solution Accelerator for BDD, in particular, now offers NAM end-to-end guidance for efficient planning, building, testing, and deploying Microsoft Windows Vista and Office Professional 2007. It now helps NAM’s IT professionals to realize a quick return on investment while also setting new standards for reliability, performance, security, and ease of use both now and in the future.

This solution accelerator provides proven tools and practices that now enable NAM IT professionals to:

- Create a software and hardware inventory to assist in deployment planning.
- Test applications for compatibility and mitigate the compatibility issues discovered during the process.
- Set up an initial lab environment with deployment and imaging servers.
- Customize and package applications.
- Automate desktop image creation and deployment.
- Ensure that the desktop is hardened to improve security within the environment.
- Manage processes and technologies to produce a comprehensive and integrated deployment.

“Previously, this would have required a complete manual deployment, leveraging a ghost-based solution and manual installation of all software apps, which was a costly, time-consuming, heavy-touch process, which required a technician to individually address every desktop,” says Joseph LaDuca, a THG Principal Consultant that assisted in the deployment phase. “At a minimum, this required a minimum hour and half per machine. With an environment of NAM’s size, where they are now able to perform these types of activities with zero-touch and lite-touch methodologies, the reduction in costs and resources is exponential.”

And, to ensure NAM captured and retained the knowledge gained in this engagement, The Henson Group provided detailed documentation, tools, as well as an offer to extend additional services in the future to help them fully realize their deployment and systems management goals.

“We are starting to reap the rewards of Vista by leveraging the ZTI processes that were installed over the summer,” McBean says. “Both Joe and Mike have incredible patience and a very deep understanding of technology. Also, they have a very strong commitment for getting the job done.”

“We would not be where we are today without their assistance, leadership and knowledge,” McBean says. “NAM can now effectively and efficiently deploy desktop software to our entire



About The Henson Group

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About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ: MSFT) is the worldwide leader in software for personal and business computing. The company offers a wide range of products and services designed to empower people through great software any time, any place and on any device.

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