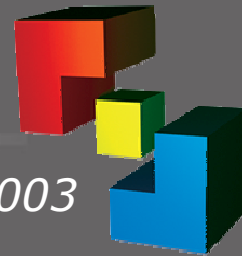


Case Study

Ryan Beck & Co., Inc.

Systems Management Server (SMS) 2003



Award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner **The Henson Group, Inc. (THG)** implemented a custom IT solution designed to simplify software management and increase security across Ryan Beck & Co.'s IT network — a project that delivered thousands of dollars in cost savings annually, among other tangible returns on investment.

BUSINESS SITUATION

As a full-service investment banking and brokerage firm servicing clients from 34 offices in 13 states, Ryan Beck relies heavily on its technology to support its operations and achieve high levels of client satisfaction in a demanding industry. Using several dozen servers linked to 1,500 client PCs, Ryan Beck's infrastructure was functional, though distributing software updates has become increasingly expensive and time consuming—especially in light of the firm's dramatic growth during the past decade.

Ryan Beck's IT executives were well aware of how vulnerable the infrastructure was to viruses and worms that could silently infiltrate the network from literally hundreds of access points. Ryan Beck did have a third-party application patch distribution tool, though that utility was used sparingly, as it offered limited functionality and was not tightly integrated with many of the Microsoft products Ryan Beck relies on.

Unwilling to continue to accept such vulnerabilities and genuinely interested in increasing efficiency and reducing the costs associated with more effectively managing its IT network, Ryan Beck initiated a search for a solution. With the overwhelming majority of Ryan Beck's infrastructure based on Microsoft technology, the company approached Microsoft for a solution. Reaffirming its confidence in THG, and in recognition of THG's impressive track record with small and mid-size financial services clients, Microsoft recommended THG perform the implementation.

SOLUTION

To meet the dual challenges of automating software distribution and increasing IT security, THG's engineers designed custom versions of Microsoft's Systems Management Software (SMS) 2003 and Software Update Services (SUS) that were deployed to Ryan Beck's network of 1,500 PCs, most running Windows 2000 Professional, though there were a number of Windows XP boxes.

By providing a comprehensive solution for planning, testing, deploying, analyzing, and optimizing software applications, SMS outfits Ryan Beck with end-to-end capabilities to help enable the seamless deployment of the latest business productivity applications to all machines, from servers to handheld devices. SMS also enables the investment banking firm to easily manage a vast hardware inventory of all its managed computer systems, delivering scalable hardware and software inventory with integrated Web-based reporting, enabling enterprises to make informed business decisions on new application deployments.

THE
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GROUP

RYAN BECK & CO.

Project Vitals

Industry: Financial Services

Customer Profile: Ryan Beck is a full-service investment banking and brokerage firm servicing clients from 34 offices spread across 13 states.

Business Situation: Using several dozen servers linked to 1,500 client PCs, Ryan Beck's infrastructure was functional, though distributing software updates has become increasingly expensive and time consuming—especially in light of the firm's dramatic growth during the past decade.

Solution: To meet the dual challenges of automating software distribution and increasing IT security, THG designed custom versions of SMS 2003 and SUS that were deployed to Ryan Beck's network of 1,500 PCs, most running Windows 2000 Professional, though there were a number of Windows XP boxes.

Results: Ryan Beck reported that the automated process of software deployment reduced the software installation process by approximately 87 days per administrator, resulting in a cost savings that can be measured in the thousands of dollars annually. And, Ryan Beck now has automated security patch management, which reduces the deployment of patches to thousands of computers from four days per month down to a single day.

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GOLD CERTIFIED
Partner

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Through the integration of the SUS Feature Pack into SMS 2003 and by leveraging Microsoft Baseline Security Analyzer (MBSA) technology and Microsoft Office detection technology, SMS provides enhanced awareness of the latest Microsoft updates for configured systems, enabling enterprises to stay one step ahead of vulnerabilities. Meanwhile, reporting was also of particular interest to Ryan Beck. Therefore, the detailed reports available in SMS 2003 now ease the application deployment process.

Software distribution and other management tasks can be targeted to machines and users using a wide variety of properties including network and hardware configuration, Active Directory organizational unit, and group membership and software installation status.

RESULTS

THG's solution provided Ryan Beck with an enterprise hardware and software inventory to more effectively manage its systems, as well as a means for more efficiently deploying new software programs and updates. Ryan Beck reported that the automated process of software deployment reduced the firm's software installation process by approximately 87 days per administrator, resulting in a cost savings that can be measured in the thousands of dollars annually.

Additionally, Ryan Beck now has automated security patch management, which reduces the deployment of patches to thousands of computers from four days per month down to a single day. Ryan Beck estimates this will save the organization an average of 23.75 deployment days every year, which translates into a 75% reduction.

And, standard Microsoft security tools like the Microsoft Baseline Security Inventory Analyzer and the Microsoft Office Inventory Tool for Updates now enable Ryan Beck to inventory systems for applicable patches and vulnerabilities.

Ryan Beck now has the benefit of summary and detail reports specifying which applications were used by users, how long they were used, and on which managed systems they were used. Usage is also tracked by user or computer, and reports are created comparing concurrent usage data to current license ownership (compliance reports). Ryan Beck also makes full use of granular software inventory file level searching, as THG configured SMS to provide custom asset discovery.

Looking ahead, Ryan Beck executives have been also considering implementing Microsoft Operations Manager (MOM) 2005, the latest version of Microsoft's comprehensive network monitoring solution that radically improves the availability, performance, and security of Windows 2000 networks and applications. MOM 2005 provides central monitoring and automatic problem resolution for networks of tens to thousands of computers, continuously monitoring user actions, application software, servers, and desktop computers.

Throughout the SMS 2005/SUS deployment, THG periodically counseled Ryan Beck on MOM's ability to monitor, manage, and secure a wide range of resources including computers, applications, Web server farms, electronic commerce (e-commerce) sites, and servers.

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.

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