



## Overview

**Country or Region:** United States  
**Industry:** Real Estate

### Customer Profile

Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. is a 68-store supermarket chain with stores in NY, Penn., NJ, and Virginia.

### Business Situation

Wegmans lacked a robust solution to proactively monitor its hardware supported by the 'Wintel' platform.

### Solution

Wegmans approached Microsoft to explore the possibility of leveraging MOM 2005. To design and deploy a solution to monitor Wegmans' unique server environment, Microsoft tapped The Henson Group.

### Results & Benefits

The Henson Group exceeded Wegmans' objectives for designing and deploying a comprehensive server monitoring solution, to oversee its Wintel platform, based on MOM 2005 that was centrally located, yet did not require extensive management. Since Wegmans currently manages less than 200 computers, all MOM 2005 components were hosted on a single computer. But, the current single MOM management group is capable of supporting approximately 4,000 managed systems and will likely never require modification for purposes of scale.

## US SUPERMARKET GIANT ROLLS OUT NEW MICROSOFT MONITORING SOLUTION, BUT WITH SAME LOOK AND FEEL AS INCUMBENT SYSTEM

Microsoft Operations Manager 2005 (MOM 2005) Deployment

*"This deployment was significant in that the client needed a solution to manage its Wintel platform, requiring the robust functionality of a MOM 2005, but with heavy customization to resemble the look and feel of an outdated homegrown tool that the administrators simply had got so used to using."*

— Michael J. Baiano, Principal Consultant/Project Lead, The Henson Group

Microsoft Gold Certified Partner The Henson Group, Inc. (THG) designed and implemented a highly customized server-monitoring solution based on Microsoft Operations Manager 2005 (MOM) to centralize monitoring of the 'Wintel' platform hardware for Wegmans Food Markets.

### BUSINESS SITUATION

Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. is a 68-store supermarket chain with stores in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia. The family-owned company, founded in 1916, is recognized as an industry leader and innovator. Wegmans has been named one of the 'Top 100 Companies to Work For' by Fortune magazine for the last several years. (In 2005, Wegmans ranked #1 on the list.)

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

Wegmans' national structure of supermarkets is connected to centralized locations where, among other operational functions, technology is managed, including the critical activities associated with monitoring of hardware and systems. Such monitoring is challenging, considering that Wegmans' IT environment is not only widely geographically dispersed, but very diverse.

In particular, the organization lacked a robust solution to proactively monitor its hardware supported by the 'Wintel' platform. (The portmanteau term 'Wintel' is a concatenation of Windows — Microsoft's operating environment — and Intel — the originator of the x86 processor architecture used in many of today's PC compatible computers.)

Wegmans was not entirely without monitoring solutions. The national retail food merchant had an array of monitoring



*The challenges of any senior IT administrator can best be met if they can perform their tasks on as many systems as possible in a single operation...*

solutions, including Dell OpenManage (set of technologies, tools, and alliances based on industry standards for systems management practices) and HP Systems Insight Manager (management application that assists you in managing all HP servers and system hardware within your IT environment). documents and content. ECM especially concerns content imported into or generated from within an organization in the course of its operation, and includes the control of access to this content from outside of the organization's processes.

The challenges of any senior IT administrator can best be met if they can perform their tasks on as many systems as possible in a single operation, even when systems are from different computer providers. In actuality, such a comprehensive solution in a legitimately technologically diverse environment, such as Wegmans operates, is not only time-consuming to develop, but also difficult to maintain as new technologies are introduced into the infrastructure.

In Wegmans' case, a costly platform consolidation was not an option, as the infrastructure provides the functionality it needed. Rather, the company's IT leaders sought a solution to enhance the monitoring of the hardware on its Wintel platform that exceeded the capabilities of an internally developed solution that had outlived its usefulness.

Furthermore, while the existing solution offered limited hardware monitoring, it also lacked the centralized monitoring that a nationwide retail organization such as Wegmans. In essence, regardless of what other technologies are installed in its various locations, at a minimum, Wegmans has at least one server on-site at each of its stores that require centralized monitoring. And, the monitoring needed to be proactive and not reactive, as was the case with the existing technology overseeing the Wintel hardware.

Considering the scope of Wegmans' operations, the organization realized it could benefit greatly from implementing a customized MOM 2005 solution for centralized monitoring of the Wintel platform.

MOM 2005 delivers enterprise-class operations management for Windows servers and other mission-critical enterprise systems. When properly implemented, MOM 2005 significantly reduces server support costs, enhances systems' performance, and increases application availability.

Therefore, Wegmans approached Microsoft to explore the possibility of leveraging MOM 2005. To design and deploy a MOM 2005 solution to monitor Wegmans' 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 MOM 2005 engagements.

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

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 official Resource Directory for Microsoft Certified Partners for Systems Management Projects for both MOM and Systems Management Server 2003.

The Henson Group achieved Microsoft's official Advanced Infrastructure Solutions competency for proven experience deploying the Microsoft systems management software family of products, including MOM, SMS, Data Protection Manager, and others.

Furthermore, The Henson Group offers a technology practice entirely dedicated to serving the business processing needs of the Retail and Consumer industry. This practice has a solid client base that includes such major retailers as A&P, Ann Taylor Stores, Dress Barn, Estee Lauder, Movado Group, Maidenform, and many others.

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

#### **SOLUTION**

To manage, maintain, and monitor its national technology infrastructure, Wegmans has a centralized team working in a network operations center with a big board display that tracks its business-critical systems. However, the Wintel servers on-site at each store, running such key applications as an employee time-management system, were not being proactively monitored.

Meanwhile, though IT executives at Wegmans wanted to replace the homegrown, reactive solution previously used for monitoring Wintel, they did not exactly embrace all aspects of the solution.

"This was unique situation where the client's IT leaders understood that their operations management staff were not well versed on the Wintel platform and would not be so anytime soon," said Michael J. Baiano, THG Principal Consultant and Project Lead.

"This meant we had to craft an intuitive solution with customized views that were similar to the tool being replaced," Baiano says. "This would not only ease implementation, but make the users more comfortable and therefore more likely to fully leverage the strengths of MOM 2005."

*The basic idea behind MOM 2005 is to situate a piece of software, an agent, on the computer to be monitored. The agent watches several sources on that computer, including the Windows Event Log, for specific events ...*

The basic idea behind MOM 2005 is to situate a piece of software, an agent, on the computer to be monitored. The agent watches several sources on that computer, including the Windows Event Log, for specific events or alerts generated by the applications executing on the monitored computer.

Upon alert occurrence and detection, the agent forwards the alert to a central MOM server. This MOM server application maintains a database that includes a history of alerts. The MOM server applies filtering rules to alerts as they arrive; a rule can trigger some notification to a human, such as an e-mail or a pager message, generate a network support ticket, or trigger some other workflow intended to correct the cause of the alert in an appropriate manner.

MOM uses the term management pack to refer to a set of filtering rules specific to some monitored application. While Microsoft and other software vendors make management packages available for their products, MOM also provides for authoring custom management packs. While an administrator role is needed to install agents, configure monitored computers and create management packs, rights to simply view the list of recent alerts can be given to any valid user account.

Several MOM servers can be aggregated together to monitor multiple networks across logical Windows domain and physical network boundaries. Through a connector framework scheme employing a Web Service, individual MOM servers can exchange alerts with other network management applications.

The Henson Group architected a MOM 2005 solution including numerous agents across a number of Wegmans' managed domains to monitor the company's corporate infrastructure.

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 a MOM Database, at least one MOM Management Server, the MOM Administrator console, the MOM Operator console, and managed computers. Optionally, a management group can include the MOM Reporting Server and the MOM Web console.

If you have less than 200 computers to manage, you can accomplish this by installing all MOM 2005 components on a single computer. If the number of managed computers grows, you can expand your management group by installing additional Management Servers on additional computers.

*(If you need to manage more than 200 computers, or if you want to provide for agent failover, it is recommended that you install the MOM components on separate computers. With agent failover, agents on managed computers can report to*

*The current single MOM management group is capable of supporting approximately 4,000 managed systems and will likely never require modification for purposes of scale.*

*another Management Server in the same management group if their primary Management Server becomes unavailable.)*

### **RESULTS & BENEFITS**

The Henson Group exceeded Wegmans' objectives for designing and deploying a comprehensive server monitoring solution, to oversee its Wintel platform, based on MOM 2005 that was centrally located, yet did not require extensive management.

Since Wegmans currently manages less than 200 computers, all MOM 2005 components were hosted on a single computer.

The current single MOM management group is capable of supporting approximately 4,000 managed systems and will likely never require modification for purposes of scale. One limitation to be aware of is the maximum number of simultaneous console connections, currently fifteen per management server. If the number of active MOM operators was to exceed thirty, the management group can be readily expanded by installing additional Management Servers on separate computers or leveraging the MOM Web Console.

Meanwhile, as part of Wegmans' business requirements, the client requested certain deliverables that required deployment of Management Packs. A Management Pack consists of a collection of rules, product and/or company knowledge, and public views.

Specifically, to address Wegmans' requirements, The Henson Group implemented the following Management Packs.

1. MS Internet Information Server Management Pack
2. Microsoft Active Directory Management Pack
3. Microsoft Exchange Server Management Pack
4. Microsoft SQL Server Management Pack

Subsequently, these Management Packs were adjusted or "tuned" to better suit Wegmans' needs.

As part of Microsoft System Center 2005, MOM 2005 today delivers open and scalable enterprise-class operational management for Wegmans by providing comprehensive event management, proactive monitoring and alerting, reporting and trend analysis, and system and application specific knowledge and tasks to improve the manageability of Windows Server System environments. Specifically, MOM 2005 enables Wegmans to:

- Identify IT health issues before they become problems through built-in application intelligence
- Improve the efficiency of Wegmans Wintel-associated IT operations through actionable best practices



### 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").

- Support Wegmans' IT operations and senior management through sharing of key service level and performance information

The most noticeable gain that Wegmans' realized was the virtual elimination of systems downtime. With the MOM 2005 Agents effectively deployed to the required servers and scripted to monitor specific services, THG reduced the time it takes to identify an issue, ascertain the root cause of the issue, re-start the server and bring that server back online to approximately 30 seconds.

The Henson Group, Inc. All rights reserved. This case study is for informational purposes only. THE HENSON GROUP MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY. All technologies described herein are either registered trademarks or trademarks of their respective owners in the United States and/or other countries.

Document published March 2008.