ABOUT TIAUTO

TiAuto (Pty) Ltd. is the holding company of South Africa's best-loved brands in the retail and wholesale wheels, tyres, and automotive related products and services categories. The TiAuto stable comprises of 7 divisions and 14 brands, all of which share the distinction of being trusted by customers and emulated by their competitors. The divisions place a high value on the loyalty accorded them by customers and strive continuously to remain deserving of their high regard.

BENEFITS

- Full view of health of virtualized environment
- Visual reports for executives
- Consolidation of 1000 disparate systems for group IT
- Ability to charge back on consumption to group divisions
- Improved support times
- Heightened management of full virtual server environment and datacentre

Full visibility, improved performance and ability to further sweat IT assets

Automotive giant opts for monitoring and capacity planning tool to help it gather the intelligence needed to bolster IT operations

When looking to improve the health of its IT systems, in particular its virtualized server environment, South African automotive leader TiAuto managed to amass extensive concrete business and financial benefits with the simple implementation of a performance and capacity management tool.

TiAuto is the holding company of South Africa's best-loved brands in the retail and wholesale wheels, tyres, and automotive related products and services industries. Headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, the TiAuto stable comprises of seven divisions and 14 brands, some of which include Tiger Wheel & Tyre, Tyres & More, YSA and Treads Unlimited.

The backdrop

The automotive company has been a VMware customer for in excess of nine years, running its virtualization technology, the vSphere suite, across all of its business operations from its head office in Johannesburg.

"When we first looked to virtualize our server environment all those years back the biggest factor that drove our decision to deploy VMware was that it would help us ease the hardware costs of our UNIX environment. An environment that was becoming increasingly difficult to scale and more and more expensive to add hardware to," states David van Vuuren, Group ICT Manager at TiAuto.

"Today our entire head office server and infrastructure business is virtualized which includes all of our Microsoft systems, as we are predominantly a Microsoft shop, as well as our bespoke ERP solution."

It wasn't until 2012 however that the company, prompted by its technology partner Datacentrix, first came across the VMware vSphere with Operations Management (vSOM) suite.

The technology

According to Van Vuuren, TiAuto was looking for a system that would enable it to deploy a charge back functionality across all of its seven divisions. It needed a system that would give the IT team a view of what each department was running, how much hardware they were using and in short summarize if the systems / servers it had in place were in fact healthy.

"After joint investigation with our technology partner Datacentrix we decided that the VMware vSOM suite would give us the visibility we needed. A key factor for us was to ensure that our virtualized environment was healthy, because when you run VMware everything just runs in the background, and you don't always have a full view of whether there is more you can do to sweat your existing hardware assets, or if the opportunity exists to resize your virtual machines and possibly stretch these further.

"It is here where we believed that vSOM could play an important role," adds Van Vuuren.

The benefit

After rolling out vSOM, the company had an instant view of its some 120 virtual machines and the benefits to the business were immediate as the TiAuto IT department could instantly identify which machines hadn't been provisioned properly as well as where there was fat or capacity in its systems which could then be optimized.

It also offered up a clearer and more overall understanding of the usage of the hardware in each environment by individual divisions. This in turn gave Van Vuuren and his team the ability to schedule and assign costs to the relevant cost centres.

"vSOM has been fantastic for the business as we can now benefit from adding more virtual machines on what we already have as we can resize our existing environment without running the risk of oversizing the storage. From a management perspective IT can now provide our executive team a visual report that shows them exactly how much hardware we use across the group. It goes as granular as defining what each hardware component is doing and in turn we can justify what we need and can qualify each infrastructural investment," he says.

"I would have to say that another tipping point in vSOM and in fact VMware's favour is the fact that as an enterprise customer with over 1000 disparate systems in multiple geographies to look after, it provides us with a tool that allows us to consolidate this management and monitoring in a single head office environment. This in turn has reduced our support times and dramatically improved our capability to better manage the systems running off of our virtual servers and datacentre," ends Van Vuuren.

The vSOM solution deployed by TiAuto has been lauded by its peers and VMware, having received the 2013 awards for Best of Show and Best Installation at VMworld 2013.

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