Leading Milling and Manufacturing Company uses eG Enterprise for Unified IT Infrastructure Performance Management

eG — *Total Performance Visibility*

Background

Claymark is a timber processing company that specialises in sawmilling, remanufacturing and distributing high quality timber products throughout New Zealand, United States, Australia and Europe. Established in 1988, Claymark is headquartered in Rotorua, New Zealand. With annual revenue in excess of NZD 125 million, over 400 employees, multiple processing facilities and branch offices in New Zealand, USA and UK, Claymark is a worldwide enterprise.

Claymark is known for processing logs from the finest New Zealand-grown radiata pine into finished products such as premium clear boards, milled and manufactured to exacting standards and exported to the world to customers such as The Home Depot, Bunnings Australia and B&Q in the UK. Increasingly Claymark's business is dependent on IT stock taking, inventory management, administration and payrolling are all done online, so if the IT infrastructure is slow, Claymark's business suffers.

How Claymark is Benefiting from eG Enterprise:

- ☑ IT users have reported a greater degree of satisfaction with IT performance.

- ☑ Claymark's IT team has increased its efficiency as it spends less time chasing problems.

- ☑ IT support costs have reduced as Claymark no longer need to hire consultants to work after hours to diagnose problems.

- ☑ Claymark's IT operations has gone from being reactive to being proactive.

- ☑ Overall, Claymark's IT team has much greater control over application performance.

The Growing Importance of IT for Claymark's Business

Claymark makes extensive use of information technology (IT) for its day to day operations. Key log management and sawmilling functions such as stock taking and inventory management are done using IT applications. Procurement, billing, payments, daily administration, payroll processing and coordination of activities across Claymark's worldwide offices are done online. Roughly 20% of its employees are users of the IT infrastructure. These include key executives and the workforce who are involved in administering and managing the sawmill operations and remanufacturing.

Claymark's IT operation is located in New Zealand and Citrix XenApp is used to centralize application and desktop access for users worldwide. The Citrix XenApp servers are virtualized on the VMware vSphere platform. Other key applications including Microsoft SQL database servers and the Microsoft Dynamics ERP application are also virtualized on VMware vSphere. Through the Citrix infrastructure, users have access to the Timbermart software that Claymark uses for its operations. Timbermart clients run on Citrix XenApp and access a Microsoft SQL database backend. Users also have access to Microsoft Office, IMS Payroll, Microsoft Dynamics, IDT time and attendance and Internet banking applications.

Claymark's Challenge: Ensuring that the IT Applications are Performing Well

Since Claymark relies on its IT infrastructure for its operations, any non-availability or slowdown of the key applications affects Claymark's operations. For example, movement of inventory, procuring new raw material, shipping goods to process orders and invoicing clients must all be done at the precise time to maximize operational efficiency and revenue for the company. Any slowdown in IT performance that affects these operations is business critical. The IT team also has to cater to end of month surges in activity. For example, payroll processing must happen on time.

Claymark has a small IT team and they are not onsite all the time. Existing monitoring tools included Kaseya for server monitoring, Spiceworks for network monitoring and Netwrix for configuration monitoring.

"We had a number of tools, yet still had limited visibility. We were able to monitor our key servers but the key applications and the virtualization tier were a black box", said Trevor Jacobs, Chief Financial Officer of Claymark. "We were also managing our IT infrastructure in a very reactive manner. Our IT staff would be notified about a problem, but would have no clue as to what the cause of the problem was. For instance, the Citrix XenApp servers would intermittently lock up

and we had no visibility into what happened in the minutes/ hours prior to the incident. Users would also complain of slowness with the Microsoft Dynamics application and it would take a lot of trial and error to resolve this. Also, because we relied on external consultants for IT expertise, when application performance issues were reported, we had to bear significant additional costs for investigation and to determine the cause of the incident."

The Solution: How eG Enterprise is Helping Claymark

After one such incident, Claymark decided that it needed to manage the IT infrastructure in a more proactive manner. To do this, Claymark looked for a unified IT performance monitoring tool that could monitor every tier of the IT infrastructure, collect and analyze metrics and also could alert them proactively, before users noticed and complained. The goal of this exercise was to eliminate guesswork out of troubleshooting. eG Enterprise was considered in this context and a two week proof of concept was performed. Claymark IT saw instant benefits from eG Enterprise - two memory leaks were highlighted within minutes of the tool being installed. The IT team, which had not previously been aware of these issues, was now able to use the information provided by eG Enterprise to resolve the issue quickly.

"Once eG Enterprise was deployed in production, we have been following a simple process. Any critical and major issue reported by eG Enterprise is investigated immediately and the problems resolved. Within weeks of initiating this process, the Citrix XenApp lock up issues disappeared!", said Martin Savory, Group Systems Manager at Claymark. "Based on alerts relating to queries and processes running on the SQL server backend, we have also been able to point out performance anomalies to third party application vendors and get them to tune their applications for improved performance."

"Overall, with eG Enterprise in place, we now have complete visibility of our IT infrastructure including Citrix XenApp, VMware vSphere and the key Microsoft applications. Even when we are not onsite, we now have empirical performance metrics they can be used to quickly troubleshoot problems. Recently, we identified cabling faults at two of our factories this way." said Martin Savory.

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Group Systems Manager,
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Benefits to Claymark from the eG Enterprise Deployment

"With eG Enterprise, we have more control of our IT infrastructure than before. We now have one tool to monitor the entire IT infrastructure and have the ability to diagnose and fix problems quickly. Our IT operations have become more proactive and our users are more satisfied with IT than in the past. Our mean time to resolve problems has gone from hours to minutes now", said Martin Savory.

The eG Enterprise deployment has been very cost effective for Claymark. With eG Enterprise's In-n-Out monitoring technology for virtual environments, Claymark's IT team now has visibility into every hypervisor and every virtual machine, something that was not the case in the past. eG Enterprise has also highlighted areas of optimization that can allow Claymark to get more out of their current IT investments.

"For the same cost as our previous solutions, eG Enterprise gives us complete visibility. Considering the reduction in problem resolution time and added savings in after hours support and service costs, we've achieved excellent return on investment from the eG Enterprise solution", concluded Martin Savory.

About eG Innovations

eG Innovations provides intelligent performance management solutions that automate and dramatically accelerate the discovery, diagnosis, and resolution of service performance issues in virtual, cloud, and physical service infrastructures. Only eG Innovations offers 360° service visibility with virtualization-aware performance correlation across every layer and every tier - from desktops to applications, and from network to storage. This unique approach delivers deep, actionable insights into the true causes of cross-domain service performance issues and enables administrators to pre-emptively detect, diagnose, and fix root-cause issues - before end users notice.