

Austrade banks on HP OpenView to boost exports



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– Gary Pettigrove
Manager, IT Business Services
Austrade

The Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) is an Australian Federal Government statutory authority within the Foreign Affairs and Trade ministerial portfolio. Its primary goal is assisting Australian companies to succeed in export endeavours and international business.

Austrade employs over 1,200 staff and is represented in 117 locations across 58 countries, with an extensive domestic network throughout Australia. Austrade offers practical advice, market intelligence and ongoing



support to Australian businesses looking to develop international markets. It also provides advice and guidance on overseas investment and joint venture opportunities, and helps put Australian businesses in contact with potential overseas investors.

The need for better control and management

One of Austrade's missions is to double the nation's exporters by 2007. One way it has identified to achieve this goal is through the development and management of cutting-edge information and communications technology solutions.

A globally dispersed network is centrally managed from Austrade's Canberra data centre with regional IT managers focused in various key areas around the world. Austrade's network includes approximately 500 desktop PCs, 850 notebooks, 100 hubs and switches, and 180 servers.

According to Mr Gary Pettigrove, Austrade's manager, IT Business Services, there were significant challenges for the IT services team in the management of its diverse and distributed network.

“We were using three or four separate products to manage servers, desktops and telecommunications, none of which were integrated with each other or the rest of our infrastructure,” Mr Pettigrove said. “Primarily, they were all designed to react to issues as they became apparent to us.



"We knew we weren't capturing all incidents that were happening on the network because it wasn't an open system available to all of our distributed IT service personnel. We did not have any visibility, or historical data, or root cause analysis on past issues.

"We needed an open system that could be accessed 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world by any of our local or regional IT service delivery staff."

A desire to achieve service management best practice as detailed by the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) guidelines required Austrade to conduct a rigorous self-analysis.

"We needed to get a handle on what level of service we provided and then set goals to improve the key performance indicators," Mr Pettigrove said. "To achieve this, we had to be able to comprehensively monitor redundancy, availability, reliability, response time to incidents, and customer satisfaction.

"We aimed to improve operational efficiencies, decrease the amount of downtime and increase user productivity. We also wanted to be able to conduct detailed reporting and become far more proactive in our service management culture."

While it was perceived that better service management processes would create operational efficiencies and cost savings, they were not the main reasons for the service management overhaul.

"It would be fair to say that the key motivation for the project was to improve our service delivery to customers so they could get on with their business with confidence in their IT and communications systems," Mr Pettigrove said.

An integrated platform

Following an extensive tender process to find a comprehensive service management solution, EMS, a HP Premium Partner, won the contract to implement Austrade's new service management platform. The successful bid was based on multiple components of the HP OpenView suite of network management solutions.

Though not as yet fully implemented, HP OpenView Service Desk will ultimately underpin all of Austrade's ITIL-based helpdesk processes. These include problem, incident, change, configuration and service level

management. In addition, HP OpenView Network Node Manager allows for real-time management of Austrade's complex distributed IP and telecommunications networks. It delivers automatic discovery, intelligent monitoring, automated dynamic root cause analysis and virtual network service state determination.

Meanwhile, HP OpenView Operations for Windows provides Windows-based event management, proactive performance monitoring, automated alerting, reporting, and graphing for Windows, Linux, and Unix systems, middleware and applications. Austrade also uses HP OpenView Internet Services to deliver a single integrated view of the complete IT infrastructure.

"We are using OpenView Service Desk 4.5 and we have it configured so that all of our local and regional IT coordinators have access to it via the network," Mr Pettigrove. "Our helpdesk staff and third-level technical support partners are also running the OpenView Service Desk client on their systems, which allows them to log calls from anywhere at any time.

"Calls are received from all over the world, 24 hours a day, either by phone, fax or email, and entered into the database by these authorised personnel. We have key business rules that we have put in place in regards to notifying third-level support or our regional people where required.

"Our current incident procedure requires the person entering the call into the system to update the client and follow the call through its lifecycle or pass it on when escalation is required."

Significant value has been added to the HP OpenView implementation by EMS, which drafted, constructed and configured OpenView Service Desk and OpenView Network Node Manager before it was implemented. The company has also provided many of the upgrades that have since been added.

Proactive service management

Mr Pettigrove said the ease and speed with which Austrade was able to implement the OpenView solution across the entire organisation was an enormous benefit. OpenView was also effortlessly integrated with third-party asset management and messaging products.

"We undertook a very rapid deployment and it worked exactly as we expected it to, without much customisation, which is always a bonus with large software projects," Mr Pettigrove said. "All we needed to do was to conduct a few workshops for configuration and some small customisation tasks such as inputting our classifications and our ITIL terminology for incidents, priorities, escalation times and service level agreements.

"Basically we just flicked it on straight out of the box. Since then we have been able to quickly integrate OpenView with our remote deployment, release and inventory software. That has made a big difference to us because now we can update our configuration and look at our connection reports for the entire network across the world.

"This in turn allows us to track assets, look at logon histories and much more, all of which we could never do before. We now also have an automated third-party messaging solution, which sends SMS messages to on-call IT managers anywhere in the world when critical issues arise."

HP OpenView gives Austrade unprecedented, centralised visibility into the organisation's entire IT and telecommunications infrastructure. Two large LCD screens on the data centre wall show Internet usage details and the up and down status of every post on the network.

"We can now be alerted, at a single glance, to issues that urgently need attention. This helps greatly to reduce downtime and increase reliability," Mr Pettigrove said. "This has been a big driver in our push towards embracing a much more proactive service management culture within Austrade."

"In the past, we operated on a best effort basis. If something went down, we would fix it as best we could and try to get it back up again as quickly as we could. We are now focused on fixing problems before they interrupt business processes and we are starting to see a reduction in critical incidents and downtime."

"We are now proactively fixing a lot of faults prior to the customer actually experiencing them. The number of critical incidents has dropped dramatically. On average we now only have one critical incident per month, whereas previously there would be about four or five."

This increased reliability is helping Austrade to use technology as a business driver, according to Mr Pettigrove.

"IT services is now becoming a strategic partner to the business, thereby allowing the organisation to get on with its prime objectives of increasing Australian export revenues," Mr Pettigrove said. "A new efficiency in the way we manage our IT service delivery is allowing us to deliver strategic advantage through our IT systems."

"We have more time to take a longer-term view of our direction and strategy about how to utilise technology in the way we do business. A good example of what the better quality of service has delivered is videoconferencing, which we have now enabled across our IP links."

"In the past we didn't have the bandwidth because of a lack of reliability or the availability of our links. We now have the ability to adequately monitor service levels and the reliability required to provide very adequate videoconferencing to about 44 posts."

HP OpenView Service Desk's close alignment to ITIL guidelines has also been a big benefit to Austrade's adoption of this internationally renowned service management guideline.

"In terms of our ITIL implementation, we couldn't have done without HP OpenView," Mr Pettigrove said. "As we move towards best practice IT service management, OpenView Service Desk, OpenView Network Node Manager and OpenView Operations give us the hard data to show that we are achieving productivity gains and quality of service delivery."

"The feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive. Our clients now know they can put in a call, have it directed to somebody or a team, get regular updates on all the progress of the call and get their issues resolved."

"There is consistency in the way calls are dealt with - they have clear expectations and clear lines of communication."

Austrade's Canberra-based and regional IT specialists also appreciate the efficiencies and functionality of the OpenView suite at their disposal. Historical data on issue resolution helps them solve problems and incidents at the first call, while the FAQ and knowledge database allows users to help themselves 24x7.

"We have seen a big reduction in the incidence of what were previously regular issues," Mr Pettigrove said. "An incident that happens in one location generally has happened elsewhere in the past and when we start seeing a trend we can proactively go and address the problem and that is solving even more of our problems."



"We are no longer finding that clients regularly complain about the quality of IT service they receive. Confidence has definitely improved within the business in relation to the service we are delivering."

Austrade has also benefited from the familiar look and feel of HP OpenView, which helps with training and staff recruitment.

"One of the reasons we chose OpenView is because it looks and feels like Microsoft Outlook," Mr Pettigrove said. "There is a great deal of ease in the way that you set up templates, new views and anything else that you may need to do."

"Someone with even only a small amount of IT ability can easily navigate it and set up a new view and then set up a graph and pull in a few statistics and move on without too much trouble. For us that means there is less training, less migration time, and less downtime. When new staff members come on board, within half an hour they are up and running sufficiently to be useful contributors to the IT service team."

Challenges

- Difficulty in managing a diverse and distributed network
- Low visibility of network incidents as system was not integrated and open to all distributed IT personnel
- A need to improve service delivery to customers

Solutions

- HP OpenView Service Desk
- HP OpenView Network Node Manager
- HP OpenView Operations
- HP OpenView Internet Services

Benefits

- Single, integrated view of the IT infrastructure facilitates service management
- Easy accessibility to the system by all local and regional IT coordinators
- Ability to proactively address urgent issues, reduce downtime and improve reliability

Contact information

For more information about HP OpenView software, please call your local HP reseller or HP sales office.

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