

Swire Beverages Ups Its Operation Efficiency

Introduction

Mention Coca-Cola and every person on the street, be it in Hong Kong, China or any corner of the world, knows the brand name. And the muscle that has the franchise to manufacture, market and distribute the products of The Coca-Cola Company in Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as 10 states in the US and 7 provinces in Mainland China is Swire Beverages Ltd. Swire Beverages is one of the 5 operating divisions of Hong Kong's leading listed companies, Swire Pacific Ltd.

The soft drink giant has at least 9 bottling plants under its name, and more than 80% of Hong Kong's carbonated soft drinks market share. It helps Coca-Cola distribute its products to over 400 million people in the region. Besides Coca-Cola, it also bottles Coke Light, Sprite, Sprite Light, Fanta, the Schweppes range of soft drinks, the Hi-C range of juices, teas and soya bean drinks, Qoo juice drinks, Sunfill Juice, as well as POWERaDE sports drinks and Bonaqua mineral water. The company also distributes Nagomi Honey Green Tea and Tian Yu Di teas, and markets ready-to-drink Nescafe and Nestea.

Going Click And Mortar

As with most industries, the beverage industry was fast ramping up on computerization and increasingly relying on IT to enhance its competitiveness. Swire Beverages' IT infrastructure is made up of a labyrinth of hardware and solutions, spanning across its various branches in Hong Kong and China. It invested heavily in setting up a distributed communication networks in these areas. Managing these diverse and sparsely distributed equipment can be unwieldy at times.

"Our supply chain and just-in-time delivery of our products hinge on IT—from ordering of raw materials, receiving orders and delivering the bottled drinks to warehousing them," said Simon Lau, Technical Support Engineer. "We would be directly impacted by any infrastructure downtime. As our infrastructure grows, it becomes paramount for us to implement a real-time traffic monitoring tool that can help us keep track of our systems/network performance and utilization. When downtime is experienced, the system must be able to escalate the event to our support team and send us alerts so we can resolve the issue quickly."

Lau pointed out that while Swire Beverages is keen on keeping pace with technological advancements and investing in new tools, it also continues to evaluate ways to effectively measure the returns its IT spending can provide.

Remote Management

"We have operations in numerous locations, but our core IT team is based in Hong Kong. Instead of hiring 7 teams to manage all 7 locations, we need a solution that can allow us to proactively manage our IT infrastructure from a central site."

It has to be able to locate and resolve any potential problems before they result in infrastructure outages," Lau added.

Lower TCO, Higher ROI

"With MAX we see the total cost of ownership of our IT infrastructure lowered. We are able to run our IT operations with only half the manpower; less time needs to be spent on monitoring the systems, as against the past where the bulk of our administrators' time is spent on manually doing so. It increases work productivity and allows our staff to engage in more strategic work. It also helps that MAX is Web-based; it makes implementation and ongoing maintenance very simple. We have been able to respond faster to both hardware failures and performance issues," said Lau.

MAX provides detailed infrastructure reports on demand or on a pre-set schedule. The information is presented in graphical and tabular formats for easy analysis. "As Swire Beverages is a fast growing company, we need a solution that can not only provide us with information on how to scale but also has to be flexible in scaling with our growth. MAX has demonstrated the ability to do so. It checks the performance of our IT infrastructure, and allows us to understand the performance and utilization of our IT systems. Capacity planning using MAX helps us plan more effectively how we can maximize our IT infrastructure. We no longer have to make wild guesses and are able to future-proof our solutions," Lau said.

Key Benefits

- Access to infrastructure performance data anytime, anywhere, all the time
- Future-proofs IT investments through accurate and efficient capacity planning
- Improved response/resolution time to hardware and performance failures
- Lower total cost of ownership, coupled with ease of deployment and maintenance



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