

Company Profile: With more than 175 years of industry experience on staff, United Technology Group (UTG) is an IT services organization that offers award winning solution implementations and proactive service.

Website: www.utgsolutions.com

Business Challenge: As a managed service provider that prides itself on proactive IT management of its customers' networks, UTG needed a reliable and robust managed services platform that would give its administrators complete access and transparency into remote systems.

Solution: UTG deployed an IT automation solution from Kaseya that allows administrators to monitor, maintain, back up and secure any customer system from a single management console—regardless of the physical location of the system. The solution interoperates with UTG's existing professional service automation application from ConnectWise—the combined business automation solution sending a message to the ticketing system where the issue is assigned to an administrator, tracked through resolution and measured against pre-determined service level agreements.



Integration of IT Management and Business Automation Enable Efficient Managed Services Offering

The concept of a true managed services business model has eluded IT service providers for decades—mainly set off track by the lack of a reliable management tool that could enable a small team of dedicated engineers to monitor and maintain many distributed systems. With this key concept unfulfilled, it simply wasn't efficient to offer a managed service.

Things changed in the mid-2000s with the development of remote management tools, however, these solutions have proven to be too complex and costly. Plus, things like IT automation, resource scheduling and workflow management are beyond their scope, requiring too much manual maintenance to enable efficient service delivery much less a scalable IT management framework.

It was no different for United Technology Group (UTG), an IT management company outside of Atlanta. In 2006, the company signed its first managed services customer, providing continuous monitoring of its servers and user workstations while conducting regular, preventative maintenance as required. However, while UTG's Vantage360 managed services offering worked well on a small scale, the company was having difficulty scaling past several hundred clients.

UTG was already using a powerful professional service automation solution from ConnectWise to manage its workflow, making sure tasks are assigned and completed on time and logged in an effective reporting mechanism. Once collected, the information can be analyzed and used to make workflow improvements. It also streamlines billing, making it more accurate and easier to educate clients on work completed. However, much of the IT management information had to be entered manually, creating an extra time-consuming task for administrators.

"We were doing great proactive management work on behalf of our clients, but the IT automation platform we were using was not as scalable as our professional services application," said Eric Dykes, president, UTG. "While more efficient than the traditional break-fix model, we were still getting bogged down by 'on' our monitoring tool rather than 'in' it."

Creating a Business Automation for Managed Service Providers

In an effort to automate basic IT tasks and enable remote management of its customers' systems, UTG deployed an IT automation solution from Kaseya, giving its administrators complete access to and visibility into any server or workstation—regardless of the physical location of the system. Administrators are now able to monitor, maintain, back up and secure the systems from a single management console. Taking automation one step further, Kaseya then seamlessly integrates with ConnectWise, automatically populating the business automation solution with reliable and accurate IT management information in real time.

"The integration between Kaseya and ConnectWise allows UTG to begin synchronizing two functions that were once distinct from each other: IT management and business automation," Dykes said. "Our staff is armed with more detailed and pertinent information about our customers' systems, and this information is readily available when they are dealing with an issue or conducting regular maintenance. It also helps with workflow management, reporting and billing."

The Kaseya agent is deployed on 400 servers and 1,200 workstations across the U.S. Administrators can gain access to each system through a single Web-based management console, allowing them to troubleshoot issues or conduct regular maintenance from anywhere with an Internet connection—whether they are in the company’s NOC outside of Atlanta, on the road or at a family barbeque. Kaseya also populates the ConnectWise solution with event information, allowing UTG to track and report on all work done to each system, network or customer environment, helping to streamline reporting, billing and customer service.

Kaseya automates much of the repetition associated with preventative maintenance such as patch management, software deployment, hard drive defrag, installing drivers and assigning permissions. UTG administrators can schedule tasks in advance or push out updates in real time and conduct the maintenance in the background without disrupting application availability or user productivity.

When an event is detected by Kaseya—such as an overburdened server or a failed transaction—a message is sent to the ticketing system in ConnectWise where resources are allocated to the issue and an administrator is assigned to the problem. The ticket is then tracked through resolution and extensive workflow automation is leveraged to ensure that we are meeting our service levels. Information such as the administrator, billing rate, time spent on the issue and time to resolution is detailed, providing complete transparency into the IT management process. This information can be analyzed at a later date and provided to the customer for accounting purposes.

An Improved Managed Services Framework

Automation and the integration between Kaseya and ConnectWise has enabled UTG to build a cost- and time- efficient managed services framework that it can scale seamlessly to a growing customer base. The Vantage360 managed services offering creates a recurring revenue stream for the company and expands its breadth of services without adding overhead or hiring more staff. As a result, UTG has grown its customer base by 75% percent and increased revenue by 100% percent since deploying Kaseya in 2006.

“The integrated business automation solution drastically improves the quality and responsiveness of our managed services offering,” Dykes said. “We’re able to take a customer online, analyze their architecture, put them in a more steady state and make changes to the environment to improve availability and performance. We’re able to do this quickly and cheaply, decreasing the cost of those services.”

By not having to conduct manual on-site maintenance or manually enter and track ticketing information, UTG administrators are more efficient and more productive, allowing them to manage more systems in less time. On site visits have been reduced as well, allowing for more time and resources to be spent on other revenue-generating add-on services such as system backups, anti-SPAM or assessment services.

Key Benefits

- UTG is able to scale its managed services offerings to its entire customer base, expanding to nearly 2,000 systems in two years
- IT management is integrated with business process management, enabling more productive workflow management and more accurate billing and reporting
- Administrators are more productive, allowing them to monitor and maintain more systems at one time while reducing overhead and increasing margins
- Administrators are able to securely log on to the Kaseya solution from anywhere with an Internet connection, enabling more flexible work-from-home schedules

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Unexpected Results

The integrated Kaseya and ConnectWise business automation solution for managed service providers has had some unexpected benefits as well.

Recently, a financial services organization using Vantage360 noticed something strange in their Kaseya dashboard. One of the company desktops showed up as connected to an unknown network. This allowed administrators to quickly reacquire the missing desktop. Without the agent based monitoring of IT assets, this recovery would never have been possible.

About Kaseya

Kaseya is a global provider of IT automation software for IT Solution Providers and Public and Private Sector IT organizations. Kaseya’s IT Automation Framework allows IT Professionals to proactively monitor, manage and maintain distributed IT infrastructure remotely, easily and efficiently with one integrated Web based platform. Kaseya’s technology is licensed on over three million machines worldwide.