MACRO|4
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Canon

Canon
Systems management puts IT operations in the picture

"With Macro 4 we know that not only are we assured of reliable and effective products but also the support of a strong partner – and that's what really makes the difference."

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Canon

CUSTOMER CHALLENGE

- Achieve a high level of systems management control in the System i environment
- Increase automation in systems management
- Strengthen availability and performance of the System i platform

SOLUTION

- Output management, message management, job scheduling, automated messaging and disk management

KEY BENEFITS

- Massive time savings and increased efficiency and productivity through automated processes
- A ten per cent reduction in Canon's facilities management (FM) fee thanks to new levels of control and automation delivered by the Macro 4 products
- Improved application availability and system performance, with simplified systems management

Since it was founded in 1937, Canon has flourished to become a global leader in imaging solutions and a brand name synonymous with high technology research and development, originality, innovation and quality. Through more than 240 consolidated subsidiaries globally and with approximately 170,000 employees, the Canon Group delivers a comprehensive range of consumer and commercial electrical products used in homes, schools and offices around the world. Canon (UK) Ltd is part of this highly dynamic and successful global group and is committed to the Canon vision of world-class quality, depending on information technology to optimize its business operation.

The challenge

As part of its evolving IT strategy, the company decided to migrate from a legacy mainframe platform to a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. "Basically, we'd reached the ceiling on our previous operating system in terms of size and capacity and we had a Year 2000 application issue to address too," said Mark Adams, IT Services Manager.

After thorough investigation, Canon (UK) Ltd chose to switch to a System i-based ERP package called Movex from Intentia. "However, we were very aware that we had achieved excellent levels of systems management control and stability with our mainframe and realized that we needed to duplicate this in the new environment. We also wanted to move towards greater automation in systems management when migrating to the midrange platform," said Adams.

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Mark Adams
IT Services Manager,
Canon (UK) Ltd

The solution

Canon had been impressed with existing Macro 4 mainframe tools for application availability and output management – it naturally approached Macro 4 to explore what was available from the company in the midrange arena. At the same time, Canon (UK) Ltd also evaluated other commercially available tools. But having initially taken Macro 4's System i message management and output management solutions on trial for just a month, Canon (UK) Ltd was very impressed with the ease-of-use and richness of functionality. "It took us less than half an hour to install the message management software on one of our System i machines and get it up and running smoothly," said Technical Specialist Dave Hamer.

Shortly after the trial, Canon (UK) Ltd decided to install a further comprehensive suite of Macro 4 solutions for job scheduling, automated messaging and disk management. "Our decision to go with Macro 4 was based on the functionality and openness of its products, the competitive pricing and the fact that Macro 4 delivers such excellent support," said Adams.

The benefits

Among the many tangible benefits and improvements that Canon has achieved since implementing the Macro 4 tools, is a massive reduction in the amount of time it takes to split reports for print distribution purposes by using output management.

"Previously it had taken us a mammoth seventeen hours and we only ever managed to reduce this to three hours using previous software tools despite a lot of effort," said Adams. "But with Macro 4, we slashed the time to just five minutes virtually immediately. Extrapolate that across the number of reports we produce and it's impressive – not just in terms of time saved on print distribution but also because we no longer have to spend ages being side-tracked or delayed with other tasks."

Macro 4's disk management solution has enabled Canon (UK) Ltd to optimize its midrange platform. "One of the drawbacks of System i is that it's difficult to quickly identify the biggest objects on the system and see what needs archiving and reorganizing. Disk Management takes the pain out of this task because we can now effortlessly identify if space is running low on the system and where the big files are, then take appropriate action before we hit major space problems." This not only simplifies the job of managing systems, it also reduces systems outages and boosts application availability. Automated messaging is being used to automatically alert key IT staff via personal pager or mobile phone if critical jobs or subsystems do not run according to schedule. "If certain subsystems get overlooked on a Sunday for any reason, we'd literally have people sitting in the warehouses on Monday morning with nothing to do – and that means financial losses for the business," said Hamer.

A ten per cent saving

The ability to conduct unattended backups and task scheduling, with automated alerts if problems arise, effectively means Canon (UK) Ltd is moving towards a more automated systems management environment. And this contributed directly to Canon (UK) Ltd being able to negotiate a ten per cent discount on its FM fee – a substantial saving helping to ensure swift payback on the Macro 4 investments.

"As well as being functionally rich, another key attribute of the Macro 4 products is that they integrate very well with each other. And because we have chosen Macro 4 as a one stop shop for our systems management solutions, we can easily resolve issues with a simple phone call to one supplier," said Hamer. "That said, the Macro 4 products are unlike others on the market because it is quite simple to integrate, say, their message management software with another supplier's pager product if you prefer. It's a good example of how flexible Macro 4 products can be."

According to Adams, another plus for Canon is the fact that Macro 4 is proving to be such a reliable and strong partner. "You don't get any marketing spin and fluff from Macro 4. Even the sales representatives are seasoned technical people who understand where we are coming from and can answer quite complex questions without having to go back to someone else in their organization. They're very switched on – responsive and technically well-informed about their products."

Towards further automation

For the future, Canon (UK) Ltd aims to continue improving and automating systems management using Macro 4 products. "With Macro 4 we know that not only are we assured of reliable and effective products but also the support of a strong partner – and that's what really makes the difference," Adams concluded.

About Macro 4

Macro 4, a division of UNICOM Global, develops software solutions that accelerate business transformation. Macro 4's cross-platform enterprise information management solutions make it easy for companies to go digital, personalize customer communications and unlock the value of their corporate content. Macro 4 solutions for application lifecycle management, session management and performance optimization are used by many of the world's largest enterprises to modernize their mainframe applications and development processes. UNICOM Global operates across all geographic regions and offers deep in-house resources and flexible IT solutions to customers worldwide.

For more information on Macro 4 products and services visit www.macro4.com.

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