

High Performance for a High-Profile Testing Center

Case Study

Client Info at a Glance

Company: Communications Company

Location: UK



Organization Description: This wireless service company, a subsidiary of one of Europe's largest communication's group, is a service provider for both commercial and consumer wireless communications.

Business Value of TeamQuest: Although this company's test center previously used performance management software, it was an inefficient solution that didn't provide needed data. Implementation of TeamQuest software allows the company to monitor and benchmark hardware and applications, and retrieve the exact data they need to test systems without impacting performance.

This subsidiary of a telecommunications giant provides both commercial and consumer wireless communications. The organization relies on an enterprise-wide CRM system to manage all customer information. As the system architecture evolves, the company needs to ensure every application related to the CRM management system is running properly. Their test center verifies both hardware and application benchmarks before they are put into production throughout the enterprise.

The Environment

According to a company spokesperson, there are approximately 400 servers in the company's test environment. The results generated within the test center are then implemented company-wide in all data centers — nearly ten times the size of the test center itself. These hardware and application components serve the 25 million customers on “nearly every type of server and application you can think of.” With so many different systems and applications to work with, finding a single monitoring and capacity planning solution was critical to the business.

The Challenge

The enterprise-wide CRM system architecture includes multiple CRM systems and Web services applications such as Oracle, PeopleSoft, Siebel, and DB2. The test center has been operating for many years with performance management and capacity planning software. As the data center grew, however, the different systems and applications needed an integrated performance management system. The IT performance software already running in their data center did not monitor every system and application. It also impacted the system by utilizing 20% of the physical memory, which was unacceptable. The result was an inefficient solution.

“The three main priorities of our testing center are return on the I.T. investment, the highest quality of service possible for our customers, and a quick time to market when moving from testing mode to production... We need to quickly mobilize in order to meet the needs of our customers.”

The Solution

The company now relies on TeamQuest® software to analyze the performance of their applications and hardware prior to production. The TeamQuest software was purchased and installed after a consultation with a professional services group, and was “a good tool from the start,” says a company spokesperson. “The application was incredibly easy to customize and was able to retrieve data to properly test and tune all CRM-related applications.” Since the initial implementation, the company has been able to significantly reduce hardware and software purchasing costs, applying the savings to the entire data center.

The telecommunications company uses TeamQuest software to monitor and benchmark hardware and applications. Most importantly, the company relies on TeamQuest as the capacity planning tool to “plan the evolution of the [CRM system’s] hardware architecture,” says the company spokesperson. Thanks to the flexibility of TeamQuest software, the company is able to characterize custom workloads and retrieve the exact kind of data they need to properly test their systems.

“During our peak usage times, which we’ve benchmarked at 1:00 to 2:00 pm, there can be as many as 100,000 users managed by the system at a given moment.”

Benefits

In order to test and benchmark each unique application and hardware component, the company relies heavily on the ability to customize the tools they use. “We can use TeamQuest on all the servers we have, so we are able to monitor and do capacity planning for every possible kind of software and hardware we can imagine. One day I may be testing [an application] on Windows, and the next I’ll be doing an application test on a UNIX server,” he says.

TeamQuest also helps find the “needles in the haystack” for the test center. For example, the connection rates within the CRM system were falling for no known reason. By running a quick analysis in TeamQuest software, the culprit was identified. “Another hardware system was not working properly either, but on the surface it appeared to have nothing to do with this connection,” he stated. The company was then able to fix this problem, bringing the numbers back up.

He considers TeamQuest technical support “very professional,” and very knowledgeable. He enjoys the ease of use of the product and the quick results it generates based on exactly what information he is looking for. “I can check on a system, multiply or divide to see results and immediately its there. I can’t do that with other applications,” he says. “It’s fast and wonderful.” He considers TeamQuest software a crucial asset to the company’s testing center. Their successes are then, in turn, a benefit to all the customers of the enterprise.

“The ability to characterize custom workloads and quickly generate results keeps this communications test center up and running.”

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