TEAMQUEST®

Visa Europe Uses TeamQuest Model to Make Best Use of Investments

Case Study

TeamQuest specializes in IT Service Optimization

TEAMQUEST®

Client Info at a Glance

Company: Visa Europe Inc.

Location: London, UK

VISA

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Company Overview: Visa Europe is the European payment system, owned and governed by its 4,600 European member banks. Visa Europe's IT supports more than 360 million cards which generate consumer purchases exceeding €1.3 trillion annually.

Business Value of TeamQuest: Cost avoidance, new project sizing, performance assurance through peak processing and the prevention of outages.

It was a week before the peak holiday season and Visa Europe's Manager of Capacity Planning and Performance Management was without concern. Most IT professionals would probably fret over potential bandwidth issues, customer complaints, and the nightmare of knowing management would not want to hear excuses about a dismal return on investment (ROI) from their IT infrastructure.

Businesses lose sales when systems aren't running at full strength but this manager knew his capacity planning team had been doing their jobs very well.

The team hadn't experienced a capacity issue since 2006. That's about the time the team was developed and when they began using TeamQuest software, a combination that has helped Visa Europe save money and cure headaches.

Visa Europe's IT team is better than most. On average, more than one-third of companies are unable to resolve up to 75 percent of their application performance issues in less than 24 hours, according to a Forrester report. Most other IT organizations, faced with a performance issue in production, resort to a team of engineers to resolve the issue — adding a negative effect on IT efficiency.

Cost avoidance and IT efficiency are two areas that have been a priority for Visa Europe since 2006.

"In prior years, we tended to operate tactically and undertook upgrades before each holiday period to ensure we had the capacity to cope with the demand," says the Visa Europe Manager. "We were looking at things with a short-term outlook instead of taking a five-year horizon to make sure money was being spent in the most cost-effective way."

"In prior years, we tended to operate tactically and undertook upgrades before each holiday period to ensure we had the capacity to cope with the demand."

Developing a capacity planning team was a good starting place. It helped that the CIO gave the mandate for this team because he understood that it's better to confirm that IT has the capacity to handle a new product or service before it's placed in production.

Even with the team in place, they still had to deal with challenges such as:

- Multiple software applications running
- True 24/7/365 availability
- High profile environment

Since the capacity planning team call the shots before something goes into production, they needed to pre-test applications and hardware configurations under real-world scenarios and varying workload demands. Fortunately, they had TeamQuest Model.

By using TeamQuest Model, the team was able to accurately predict the resources needed to support consistent service delivery.

"A key benefit of TeamQuest software — over and above anything in the marketplace — is that we don't have to create a theoretical, mathematical model," the Manager explains. "We can take live data from our system and model from that."

Visa Europe confirmed that the models run using TeamQuest software are 98 percent accurate. An added bonus is that TeamQuest Performance Software runs on heterogeneous environments. Visa Europe runs primarily Sun and AIX boxes.

"Delivering mission critical services cost effectively is a core competence of Visa Europe," says the CIO of Visa Europe. "The key to doing this reliably is ensuring all our systems are operating at the appropriate balance of load and risk. TeamQuest gives us the insight into how our systems are behaving and allows us to manage the systems most effectively."

Working with the business

Building trust within the business and driving IT efficiency have served the capacity planning team well.

When the business needs a quick and accurate assessment on the impact of additional services on their boxes, they call the capacity planning team.

"We can run a simulation in a couple of minutes and provide an answer," says the Manager. "That beats telling the business to come back in a week after we crunch some numbers in Excel."

The team can make the decision over the phone and let the business unit know whether they need to factor anything into the mix for the new infrastructure. Due to the capacity planning team's use of TeamQuest Model and the communication with the business, they are able to make informed business decisions with confidence.

TeamQuest Model has helped Visa Europe and other IT departments work with the business in several ways:

"TeamQuest gives us the insight into how our systems are behaving and allows us to manage the systems most effectively."

- Manage the impact on servers for mergers and acquisitions
- Improve ROI on existing IT investments
- Avoid outages and performance problems by planning ahead
- Know — in advance — how systems will respond to unexpected bursts of activity
- Predict the behavior of heterogeneous environments

Improving Efficiency

Server consolidation, a model for IT efficiency and cost avoidance, has become a key strategy as more businesses try to do more with less in the current economy.

In 2008, Visa Europe completed a server consolidation project moving 64 stand-alone servers down to four consolidated frames.

"What we now know is that we weren't making efficient use of the stand-alone frames and we've been able to save ourselves a lot of money in software licensing," says the Manager. They also discovered they didn't need to upgrade their hardware or buy additional software.

"TeamQuest Model allows us to make the best use of our investments and we know that we're putting it into discovering bottlenecks instead of throwing money at systems just for the sake of it," says the Manager.

The capacity planning team has been very successful at that too. Last peak holiday season, Visa Europe processed just over one billion transactions without any performance issues. In fact, on December 24, 2008, the company processed more than 730 transactions per second without a disruption. That's 1.4 billion Euros processed for Visa Europe's member banks in a single day — thanks in part to IT — and another reason why the head of Capacity Planning and Performance Management wasn't worried during the peak holiday season.

"TeamQuest Model allows us to make the best use of our investments and we know that we're putting it into discovering bottlenecks instead of throwing money at systems just for the sake of it."

TEAMQUEST

WORLDWIDE HEADQUARTERS

UNITED STATES
TeamQuest Corporation
One TeamQuest Way
Clear Lake, Iowa USA 50428

OTHER LOCATIONS

SWEDEN
GERMANY
UNITED KINGDOM
MEXICO
HONG KONG

With resellers in many additional countries.

CONTACT US

info@teamquest.com
teamquest.com/about-us/contact-us/

Case Study: Visa Europe Makes Best Use of Investments