

Manhattan Construction

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SUCCESS STORY

Top commercial contractor combines SUSE® LINUX, IBM* and Oracle* to reduce support and maintenance costs by 70 percent

OVERVIEW

Manhattan Construction is one of the top 20 largest commercial general contractors in the U.S. and the third largest privately held company in Oklahoma. Notable projects include the Reliant Stadium in Houston (home of the 2004 Super Bowl), the Santa Fe Opera Theater, the ballpark in Arlington, Texas and the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center in Washington D.C.

CHALLENGE

With a 10 percent annual growth rate, Manhattan Construction had reached capacity on its Sun system. The proprietary UNIX* system also locked the company into a single source for hardware and operating components, and to some extent, maintenance and support. The company also needed a better platform on which to upgrade its enterprise Oracle* applications.

Manhattan Construction has a small IT budget, less than one percent of its gross revenue. With the modus operandi of "better, faster, cheaper," the company needed to find a cost-effective way to improve overall performance and reliability.

SOLUTION

To replace its Sun* environment, Manhattan Construction evaluated Microsoft*, Red Hat* and SUSE LINUX. The company felt confident that a SUSE LINUX solution running on the IBM xSeries* platform would offer the best support, particularly for its enterprise Oracle applications, while providing full control of its IT environment.

"Moving to a Linux* platform obviously insulates us from a lot of the Microsoft-based headaches, specifically the vulnerabilities, the viruses and non-stop patching," said Tadd Moore, manager of Engineering and Support for Manhattan Construction. "Linux allows us to spend more time on projects that make us money."

Manhattan Construction will use SUSE LINUX to support its 40-node remote network for all its offices and job sites. The company expects the transition to be completely transparent to end users and anticipates improving its network uptime from 95 to 99.999 percent. The company also plans to significantly decrease administration time with a common Linux skill set.

"Maintaining a proprietary infrastructure is costly, not only in hardware, but also support. We're able to provide availability, stability and reliability with SUSE LINUX at a much lower price point than with our previous proprietary solution. With the combination of Novell, IBM and Oracle as our partners, we feel we have the best of all possible worlds."

—Duwayn Anderson,
Vice President,
Information Services
and Technology,
Manhattan Construction





"With SUSE LINUX, we're able to consolidate our internal skill sets, which provides tremendous value to us," said Moore. "Instead of relying on one or two specialized people for our operating system support, we're able to leverage the fact that everyone knows Linux. It will make us sort of like a Microsoft shop, but without the expense and risk."

Because the IT team spends less time on routine administrative tasks, the administrators can work more closely with business units on strategic projects. The team recently deployed a marketing database that centralizes all the marketing collateral for the company and makes it easily accessible with a Web-based interface.

One of the best experiences so far with SUSE LINUX is that Manhattan can host its own Web server, reducing outsourcing costs of nearly \$60,000 a year. Another significant benefit is that the system performs better and is far easier to maintain. The company was able to combine all its Web services, including its internal marketing database and trouble ticketing software, with plenty of room for additional Web sites and applications.

"Six months ago, moving to Linux might have caused us a bit of discomfort simply because we weren't sure anyone could deliver a mature and supportable distribution," said Duwayn Anderson, vice president of Information Services and Technology at Manhattan Construction. "The fact

that Novell has stepped in and acquired SUSE LINUX eliminates a lot of our concerns."

Manhattan Construction can now purchase Linux products through the standard Novell licensing process, streamlining both acquisition and support. The company is looking forward to implementing other Novell® products for Linux, including Novell ZENworks.

"What Novell has done for Linux is brilliant," said Moore. "To combine all of the mature qualities that we've enjoyed with Novell products on a SUSE LINUX platform that we think is the wave of the future is just utopia."

RESULTS

Maximizing a relatively small IT budget, Manhattan Construction selected SUSE LINUX to run its enterprise more efficiently and with greater performance. The company has reduced its initial acquisition costs by 40 percent and anticipates a 70 percent reduction in annual support and maintenance costs. By hosting its own Web server, the company will save \$60,000 a year.

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