



ING Life, India

As its business grew rapidly, ING Life, India Life Insurance found that the corresponding rising cost of operating system and application licences for its laptops and desktop PCs was becoming prohibitive. The company replaced its Microsoft* operating systems with SUSE® Linux Enterprise Desktop, making significant software costs savings over the life of each machine.

Overview

ING Life, India Life Insurance in Bangalore, India, is a joint venture between ING and Indian partners Vysya, retailing life insurance products. The majority of its business is generated through advisors who exclusively sell ING Life, India insurance, with the remainder deriving from Bancassurance partners, co-operative banks and brokers. The company is growing fast, and has offices across the entire country.

Challenge

ING Life, India Life insurance sells products tailored for every different personal situation. The company handles large volumes of transactions, and margins are slim—so running a cost-effective administration is absolutely essential.

Opening a new office represents a major investment cost. The ING Life, India team investigated the licence and operating cost of a laptop or desktop PC with Microsoft Windows* and Microsoft Office over its expected lifetime. For small offices in particular, the licence costs represented a significant and unwanted overhead.

“We wanted to reduce costs on our desktops while ensuring continuity of access to our central database systems and e-mail servers,” said Ravishankar, Chief Information

Officer at ING Life, India. “Starting up a new office in a small location put a great deal of pressure on costs—delaying the return on investment.”

Solution

ING Life, India needed to ensure that its users could continue to access their corporate e-mail and applications in the same way as before, but recognised that there was no need for users to have the full Microsoft Office suite—which was essentially the only element requiring the company to have Microsoft Windows on its desktops.

The ING Life, India IT team identified SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop as the ideal replacement for Windows on its laptops and desktops because of its lower licensing costs, ability to connect seamlessly to Windows servers and free bundled OpenOffice.org Novell® Edition productivity software.

“By implementing SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop, we reduced both the operating system and application software costs for each desktop machine,” said Ravishankar. “We no longer need to invest in antivirus software, yet we are now far better protected against viruses and other malware. SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop also has a smaller footprint than Windows, so our users enjoy better performance on the same hardware.”

ING Life, India at a glance:

Life insurance company with offices throughout India

■ Industry:

Financial services

■ Location:

India

■ Products and Services:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop

■ Results:

- *Cut per-desktop operating costs*
- *Made significant annual savings by migrating desktops from Windows to Linux*
- *Improved security and stability of desktop environment, boosting employee productivity*

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Ravishankar

*Chief Information Officer
ING Life, India*



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Ravishankar
Chief Information Officer
ING Life, India

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ING Life, India uses Microsoft SQL Server for its database applications and Microsoft Exchange Server for e-mail, and the company continues to buy client access licences as appropriate. Employees use the Novell Evolution™ e-mail client on their desktops, which provides full support for all the functions offered by Microsoft Outlook.

Migrating to SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop required a degree of user education, completed as part of an associated change management programme. The company trained staff to use the new environment after each office migration, without any hitches.

“It was important that the selection of desktop operating system allowed us to use open source client applications for the database and e-mail systems, as we did not want to budget for separate, proprietary software,” said Ravishankar. “SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop allows us to run a wide selection of client software that gives us full access to our existing central systems without additional licence fees.”

Results

The migration from Microsoft Windows to SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop at ING Life, India will generate considerable cost savings. The company has also gained a faster and more stable working environment.

“SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop represents the first step in a longer-term strategy to move to open source software—and we are already achieving enormous cost savings,” said Ravishankar. “Most of our back-office servers could also be migrated to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, with the potential to extend the financial benefits.”

The new low-cost desktop infrastructure makes it possible for ING Life, India to launch small offices cost-effectively, opening up new sales opportunities where other higher-cost insurance retailers might struggle to become profitable.

“The SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop gives us a consistent, simplified IT infrastructure, saving significant costs,” said Ravishankar. “The Novell solution is enabling us to compete more effectively in a retail environment in which margins are very tight.”



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