athene® selected as tool of choice by Capgemini

Following a rigorous evaluation process, Metron's athene® Performance Management and Capacity Planning software was selected by Capgemini as the tool of choice for their Outsourcing Division.

Capacity Planning and Performance Management at Capgemini

Nick Varley, Performance and Capacity Specialist at Capgemini was responsible for preparing the business case that resulted in the selection of athene®. He joined the UK Outsourcing operation in 1998 with more than twenty years experience of systems programming in a mainframe environment. "Having worked with IBM mainframes for so many years, I was very familiar with the role which Capacity Planning and performance management tools can play. I was keen to introduce this capability for Unix and Windows-based systems."

The Technical Governance team in the Outsourcing Group at Capgemini, has a brief to identify new technologies and best of breed solutions that will enable the company and its clients to work more efficiently and more cost effectively. The ability to deploy 'capacity on demand' is an example of one such area that is currently being explored.

According to Nick Varley, "Our Service Delivery teams, who provide the day to day interface with our clients, were keen to have better visibility on what was happening on clients' systems. Armed with up to the minute systems performance data and the ability to access trending information, they would be able to proactively manage these systems on behalf of our clients. We would be able to help avoid unnecessary expenditure and to size systems correctly based on their actual workload, rather than perceived requirements.

The need to find a Performance Management and Capacity Planning tool that covered as many platforms as possible, at a reasonable cost and requiring realistic levels of effort to maintain it, was vital to Capgemini."

Evaluation the options

After reviewing a number of products in the market against requirements a short-list of vendors was drawn up. Following on from discussions with the vendors, products were evaluated and analyzed for costs, whenever possible drawing upon practical experience of the use of the tools. In the case of Metron a small pilot system was set up to demonstrate athene® and the product received a positive response from people within Capgemini. It was easy to install, easy to use, had an uncomplicated architecture and was succinctly packaged.

Following a period of intense analysis and evaluation, it was determined that athene® was the most appropriate solution for Capgemini.

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Promoting the adoption of athene®

Much of the time has been spent in implementing the product, as well as educating Service Delivery and technical teams within Capgemini in the UK on the use of athene®, and the benefits it can deliver when compared with previously or currently used tools. All new outsourcing projects now include an option of performance management, and athene® is automatically considered to fulfil this role.

The move to athene® is slower where alternative approaches have been used for some considerable time, but Capgemini are confident in the choice of athene® . "As with any large organization, the move to adopt a new approach or process can sometimes be slower than one might hope for, but I believe that over time, many of our outsourcing projects will be utilizing athene®.

The automated approach to report production and their availability on-line via the Capgemini intranet, for example, is quite a culture change for those used to producing lengthy typewritten reports. The benefits, however, are incontrovertible."

Capgemini now has a number of employees trained in the use of athene® who are actively deploying it on behalf of clients. Nick Varley: "We have a small number of people trained in using athene®, and it is easy to manage and administer. We use it 24/7 to collect performance data on our clients' systems, and in many instances it is fully automated." "We are already seeing significant cost savings and these savings will continue as we automate more of the process of Performance Management.

"In addition, we also plan to extend the use of athene® to include Capacity Planning. Thus, with athene® we will be able to apply the same well-established methodology and discipline that is used in the mainframe environment for the myriad of Unix, Linux and Windows based machines. We will be able to model changes in technology, carry out server consolidation projects and assist clients to identify the correct timing for upgrades.

Assessing the results

"We are already well on the way with many of our clients to providing better visibility on what is currently happening with their systems. The next logical step, using athene®, is to be able to tell them what will happen next. This will prove to be, I am sure, a very valuable additional service for us to offer our clients."

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