

Gulf International Bank adopts Orb Data's Managed Service



Gulf International Bank BSC (GIB) is a leading merchant bank in the Middle East with its principal focus on the GCC states. The Bank provides client-led, innovative financial products and services to a wide customer base in the region, including investment banking, asset management, project and structured finance and Islamic banking.

While the Kingdom of Bahrain is the hub of GIB's relationship banking activities, Gulf International Bank (UK) Limited (GIBUK), the Bank's principal subsidiary, provides a centre of excellence for asset management and investment banking.

Background: Mo Jenab, Head of IT

Mo joined Saudi International Bank (SIB) in 1996 in a trade floor support position after leaving university and is now the Head of IT. During this time and after a merger with GIBUK in 2000, Mo has been responsible for the consolidation of the IT support teams responsible for the data centre, helpdesk and front office, incorporating both the UK and New York Offices.

The need for high availability

As an ever-changing business, GIBUK needed to ensure their applications and infrastructure remained available for their developing customer base. As a result, Mo identified the need for a monitoring product, however as there had already been one aborted attempt to install software with another provider he had to convince management that the purchase of software would bring positive benefits. Mo said, *"As our last attempt to install a monitoring solution failed it was understandable that senior management was nervous about buying a new product. However I knew that as a changing company we needed a monitoring solution."*

The solution

This view eventually won out and GIBUK bought IBM Tivoli Monitoring and IBM Netcool/OMNibus from Orb Data in 2010. These tools provided the breadth of monitoring required for the increasingly Virtual infrastructure that GIBUK was implementing. Mo said, *"We looked at automated monitoring*

Best Practices

In early 2008 GIBUK introduced ITIL principles to ensure Best Practices for service delivery were implemented. Mo stated *"If you don't have processes in place and haven't adopted Best Practices, it's pretty difficult to ascertain the exact requirements and therefore difficult to implement a system that's fit for purpose."*

To support ITIL, we recognised the need for the right tools. Two things sprang to mind: on one hand, an ITSM solution to record problems, incidents and changes, which also included a CMDB at its core and on the other, a monitoring service to make the IT department more proactive.

solutions from a number of vendors, and were impressed with the new IBM Tivoli monitoring portfolio of products. We at GIBUK were familiar with older versions of Tivoli and were dubious of its capabilities; however the latest version proved to cover all our requirements.”

Once GIBUK had bought the solution it considered the implementation options and because of resource issues and the desire to utilise the software immediately, a decision was taken to invite Orb Data and their consultants to make sure it was put in place optimally.

Despite delays caused by changes at GIBUK, the implementation went smoothly and IT worked with Orb Data to ensure all their requirements were met and realised. Mo said “We were really impressed with the Orb Data team from the start. They worked with us to obtain our initial requirements and due to our changing requirements throughout the project Orb Data worked late night after night to ensure that our expectations were met and that the product was implemented smoothly.”

Managed Service

While the project was being implemented, Mo realised that maintaining and updating the Tivoli solution would be key to its ongoing success. He recognised that the Tivoli software would also need maintaining and was worried that his team would distract from their existing responsibilities and that they would not have the time or skills needed to develop the monitoring service.

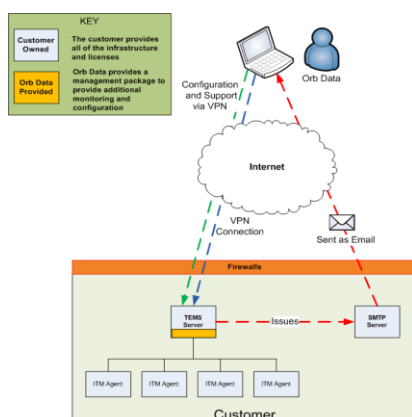
“Looking at the expertise of the Orb Data team made me realise that my team would need to acquire similar skills. I realised that changes to our systems and applications would mean that the Tivoli monitoring would need to be continually administrated to ensure we got the most from our investment. Given the nature of the system we saw it not feasible to allocate an IT member to fully administer Tivoli but to engage in Orb Data’s service where they would administer the system at a lower cost.”

“We cannot fault the Orb Data Managed Service,” Mo said. “My team has been really impressed with the knowledge of all their support staff and also the speed of response to any issues we have raised. More importantly we are also seeing a reduction in the number of operational incidents which proves to the business that we were right to buy an IBM Tivoli monitoring solution.”

In January 2011 Orb Data launched their Remote Monitoring Managed Service. Simon Barnes, Orb Data’s Director of Managed Services, said, “We were noticing that unless a company invested in Tivoli skilled administrators their projects could start to stall. We thought that using our 12 years of

implementing and running Tivoli projects we could run these implementations better and cheaper than the customer. We therefore designed a service that included best Practice Alerts, Management Reports, Tivoli Infrastructure Monitoring, Remote Support via VPN, Capacity Planning, Incident Management and Change Management.”

He added “In addition we also run the service to maximise the ROI that the customer gets from the



tools. For instance we take regular information from the help desk/administrators to determine incidents that are not automatically captured and also events that could be resolved automatically but are not.”

Business view

In tough economic times, it is important for IT to promote its value to the business, in Mo’s words, it tends to be “an engine room no-one really sees unless something goes wrong”. Since the Y2K fiasco, companies in general have lost a lot of trust in IT.

At GIBUK, the Operational Risk Committee exists to control risk, which can only be successfully achieved through forward thinking. Prior to the Tivoli installation, any Operations Event Reports were dealt with reactively and often very visibly to the business. Now, events have dropped significantly and the business at all levels can see the impact the monitoring solution is having on efficiency.

A meeting of minds

Mo has studied the history of organisations and what makes them successful. Many years ago, whipping your workforce into shape got results, then companies like Ford introduced the production line and speed of production set organisations apart. Following that came processes and procedures, then systems and programming expertise. He believes that wherever you are in the world, we’re now all on a similar playing field; we have all caught up. The only way to differentiate your business and stay ahead is by concentrating on the culture of the organisation. The heart of that culture is people.

“I’ve implemented a culture in IT whereby people come into work and feel very content. This is primary due to the growth. IT staff are learning, but at the same time are enjoying their work and team work is very much appreciated– a bit like school –you work hard, learn a lot, but you are amongst friends. I get the same sense that Orb Data have the same culture and attitude implemented within their organisation; that’s probably why we work so well together.”

“Simon Barnes, (co-founder and Director at Orb Data) gets involved from top to bottom. One of our Services team called him while he was on holiday and he was still helping us deal with a particular issue. That really is a nice touch and shows dedication!”

The Future

GIBUK is now considering the use of service views in their London offices to show the state of its monitored applications. This is the next logical step in the Automation journey and will provide further visibility of their key services as well as providing SLA reports. To this end Orb Data is demonstrating what can be achieved with their current Netcool suite and also the functionality of Tivoli Business Service Manger (TBSM).