

# Manage Effectively to Improve ROI

Reduce costs by utilising Microsoft® System Center solutions



## Reduce costs: Re-think your management strategy

Consolidating disparate management toolsets in one's IT environment can pave the way to impressive cost savings.

## Why look at management practices to reduce costs?

Given the complexities of today's technology environment, many organisations feel compelled to use a range of disparate technologies and tools to manage their infrastructure. These solutions are tightly interconnected and activities range from building and deploying servers, desktops, software distribution, software licence management, patch management or provisioning hardware proprietary to a vendor.

The general perception is that these management tools and processes are 'complex', requiring considerable skill and knowledge to manage and maintain. A mix of IT personnel is required for day-to-day management tasks and they need to be regularly trained in order to remain up to speed on the different vendors' technologies.

Adding to the burden is the fact that it is difficult to manage legacy products, not to mention develop and maintain complex monolithic build scripts that are often poorly documented and only truly understood by their authors. Troubleshooting also becomes problematic in a disparate environment, as it's difficult to establish which vendor or solution is at fault due to the interconnectivity of all the technologies.

Most organisations with large-scale software **deployments of over 10,000 seats** have reported a **payback period of one year** after deploying Microsoft System Center solutions, which proves that **automation and centralised management are key**.

## How can I manage my environment effectively?

If these challenges sound all too familiar, help is at hand. The Microsoft System Center Management suite helps manage physical and virtual IT environments across data centres, desktops and devices. The solutions are designed to help IT achieve operational automation by leveraging and integrating existing tools and using best-practice processes, such as the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and Microsoft Operations Framework (MOF).

Essentially, the solutions help you to automate processes such as operating system deployment, software provisioning, task sequencing, data backup and restoration. As a result, you can look forward to impressive savings. Most organisations with large-scale software deployments of over 10,000 seats have reported a payback period of one year after deploying Microsoft System Center solutions, which proves that automation and centralised management are key.

Standardising on the Microsoft System Center platform reduces management complexities. System Center products are integrated with one another (and with other Microsoft technologies, including identity, security, database and server) to provide a consistent management approach. The suite also provides centralised management for monitoring cross-platform environments, such as Linux, UNIX and the Apple OS.

## What else should I consider when evaluating a management solution?

Virtualisation impacts how organisations run their IT operations. Virtualised assets are not physically constrained by location; they are abstract, which means that the complexity of an IT environment increases, making it harder to control and ultimately manage.

For example, if you separately manage each individual virtual machine, it becomes complex. Using different tools for virtualised assets can also result in duplicate processes for managing resources, further adding to the complexity.

Organisations will therefore only benefit from virtualisation if it is managed in the same way as a physical environment.

Microsoft System Center solutions do just this, managing all the assets in the environment – virtual and physical – from a single pane of glass.

In addition, with a standardised platform, you can also save on licensing purchases. To ensure that organisations maximise their investments in Microsoft software assets, Microsoft Enterprise Agreement customers can deploy Microsoft Systems Center solutions at no cost when purchasing client licences for desktops.

## How can I employ the most effective management solution for my organisation?

Microsoft Systems Center solutions and products are 'enablers'. The Microsoft System Center suite includes a host of capabilities and unless you are intimate with what the technologies can do, you cannot take full advantage of all its features.

This is where it makes sense to draw on the expertise of a Microsoft certified partner, such as Dimension Data, you will be in a position to develop a management strategy tailored to your environment and also control spiralling management costs. Most importantly, you will be able to innovate or leverage the capabilities of the solutions and products to ensure that you gain maximum business results immediately.

## Case in point

Norwich Union reduces time to update servers and 35,000 computers with Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007.

### The company

Norwich Union is an Aviva company. Aviva is the world's fifth-largest insurance group and the largest insurance services provider in the UK. It is the leading provider of life and pension products in Europe and the company is actively growing its long-term savings business in Asia, Australia and the USA.

### The challenge

As with other organisations of a similar size, Norwich Union used disparate technologies for systems management, which resulted in greater cost and increased complexity.

A specific business requirement was the need to implement a solution for the entire environment to ensure that the business was not exposed to lack of patching during the upgrade. In addition, the solution needed to work immediately.

### The solution

Microsoft suggested Norwich Union work with Dimension Data to design and implement Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) 2007. Dimension Data successfully implemented SCCM on time and transferred sufficient knowledge to Norwich Union's IT operations team to ensure full utilisation of the advanced features of the management tool, while reducing dependency on external consultancy.

### Value added

Norwich Union currently uses SCCM for the distribution of updates to 3,000 servers and a 35,000 strong desktop fleet spread across multiple UK sites. As a result, the productivity of the company's IT staff has been boosted as devices can be patched more quickly. Future plans include utilising SCCM for software builds and automatic deployment of software, as well as for licensing management.



By leveraging the guidance of a Microsoft **certified partner**, such as **Dimension Data**, you will be able to develop a **management strategy** tailored to your environment.

#### About Dimension Data

Dimension Data is a solutions and services provider that helps clients to plan, build, support and manage their IT infrastructures. We combine our expertise and heritage in networking, IP, security, Microsoft infrastructure, data centre and contact centre technologies with capabilities in consulting, integration and managed services to create customised solutions that support your business goals.

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