glassbeam™

Hitachi Data Systems

BLUE ARC®

Glassbeam Helps BlueArc streamline diagnostics analysis and doubles productivity of it's technical support staff. BlueArc, a wholly owned subsidiary of Hitachi Data Systems, develops and sells clustered Network Attached Storage (NAS) systems for storing and managing digital content and unstructured (file-based) data. The company's products use a scalable file system that allows for multiple storage appliances (nodes) to be managed as a single pool.

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Overview

Industry

• Storage Appliance

Challenges

• Increasing support case volume and escalations

• Ineffective call-home strategy

• Monetize new service ideas

Solution

• Glassbeam Platform handles thousands of data streams

• Support automation module interfaces with saleforce.com

• Glassbeam Support Portal™ to diagnose support cases and perform root cause analysis

Impact

• More than 50% of incoming alerts are automatic case opens

• 20% cost benefit in its support operations

The Challenge

Before engaging Glassbeam, BlueArc's main challenge was the lack of an effective call-home strategy for its installed base (i.e., the ability to retrieve product usage and configuration information in real time). With a growing install base of nearly 1000 systems across 500 plus customers, the amount of product operational data and diagnostics information being collected from each system per day was overwhelming for the existing homegrown solution. In addition, the need for real-time reporting and analytics on incoming data streams was growing.

Support Services: Email Alerts and Support Escalations

BlueArc was also challenged to make the support organization more efficient without adding headcount in a linear fashion to handle increasing support case volume and escalations.

"We wanted to do more with less," said Denis Kornilov, BlueArc's Senior Director of Support Operations. "We couldn't have our support staff growing linearly with our installed base. We needed automation and support workflow analytics to meet our goal of continuously enhancing the customer experience. To be cost effective, we needed to proactively address product issues and bypass the need to access BlueArc's internal support tunnel as much as possible."

Professional Services: Monetize new service ideas

Prior to implementing Glassbeam, the company had a small system for monitoring and tracking customers using call-home email data. This was not meeting the needs of the Professional Services group, however, where one of the goals was to monetize new service revenues by analyzing customer install base data. "This internal system was not scalable," said Mark Stratton, Vice President of Customer Services. "It lacked the performance design and capabilities to produce new types of analysis for value-added services.

We could get by for awhile with our homegrown tools, but as we started to grow, we would need a new approach towards call-home infrastructure to drive and scale our business for the future. BlueArc's internal system was inexpensive, but it could only grow so much with fewer capabilities over time. To improve the system, automation was key — less people, less time, and less logistics. This would allow the company to focus on expanding its service revenue as well."

The Solution

"We wanted to do more with less," "We couldn't have our support staff growing linearly with our installed base.

Denis Kornilov, BlueArc's Senior Director of Support Operations

Glassbeam has provided BlueArc with a scalable platform plus business application modules to handle incoming call-home data. The Glassbeam platform is able to handle thousands of incoming streams of data each day from hundreds of devices from the worldwide installed base. Glassbeam uses its patentable technology, called SPL™ (Semiotic Parsing Language), to create structure, meaning, and relationships between hundreds of elements in a typical BlueArc system operational data stream.

The SPL platform abstracts the complex mechanics of data warehousing into a repeatable, scalable, and simple process by processing incoming data in real-time to produce the tables, schema, and database to create a function-specific data warehouse called Clearhive™.

BlueArc has also successfully implemented the support automation module from Glassbeam that interfaces with its CRM suite for salesforce. com. Each time an alert is sent from the field, it is diagnosed on a real-time basis with certain thresholds and triggers to automatically open up a support case in salesforce.com. Glassbeam

has also extended its solution architecture with salesforce.com to periodically take in customer information for installed systems as well as relevant contract details. All of this information is combined through the SPL engine to build a richer information repository in Clearhive™.

Today, BlueArc's support organization uses the Glassbeam Support Portal™ to diagnose support cases and perform root cause analysis on major escalations. The Professional Services organization has deployed customer-facing dashboards to empower its customers with real-time information on how their systems are performing against certain key parameters like performance, capacity, configuration changes, and events.

The Impact

"Our internal system was not scalable," "It lacked the performance design and capabilities to produce new types of analysis for value-added services.

Mark Stratton, *Vice President of Customer Services*

"With Glassbeam solutions, BlueArc can now accomplish twice as much, with better information and diagnostics analysis readily available for all my technical support staff," says Denis. Level 1 support is regarded as the front-line support for BlueArc and is focused on opening and assigning case load to level 2 or level 3 technicians. With Glassbeam support automation linked to salesforce.com, more than 50% of incoming alerts are candidates for automatic case opening.

This will provide cost savings in hundreds of thousands of dollars as BlueArc business scales over the next few years.

In addition, BlueArc Level 1 support staff is using Glassbeam's support dashboard solution directly to troubleshoot some cases, thus minimizing the number of cases escalated to higher levels. Level 2 and level 3 support engineers are using Glassbeam Support Portal to analyze certain escalations in a few hours that would have otherwise taken days to resolve with multiple interactions at customer and field engineering levels. Overall, BlueArc estimates a 20% cost benefit in its support operations by leveraging Glassbeam infrastructure and solutions.

After implementing the Glassbeam solutions, BlueArc has been able to improve real-time visibility

into how its installed base is working at various customer sites. This has led to a tremendous value-add in terms of creating new dashboards per customer site both for internal and external use by its customers.

"The notion of mining customer infrastructure data and selling back that value as dashboards to our customers has a high, strategic value for BlueArc" says Mark. "This value added benefit is aligned with the company's goal to expand professional services revenue as well. We need to know how to stay in better touch with our customers, be proactive, and plan better. We need to be more intelligent and find ways to up-sell customers to prevent issues or down time.

Glassbeam has helped us address these important issues in our overall game plan." Glassbeam's solutions have also helped BlueArc gain visibility into its install base, which has aided the team in recognizing which customers are running effectively or ineffectively. The company can now closely observe its own customers and configurations and can ask more intelligent questions, faster.

The Glassbeam Difference

Glassbeam has enabled BlueArc to deliver proactive and predictive resolution to customer issues, improving customer retention, and lowering support delivery costs. It has also allowed BlueArc to create new monetized professional services to advise customers on audit and optimization services.

"We were getting tons of data from our products, but the structure of the data made it very difficult to analyze and correlate. With the help of product analytics provided by Glassbeam, I have been able to handle more customers in a quality manner with better tools and be equipped with better information.

With better analytics we have identified issues before they become problems, proactively contacting customers and resolving potential situations, thereby avoiding support calls before they ever surfaced. This has greatly helped us to drive efficiency and increase customer satisfaction in the service organization." Chris McBride, Senior Vice President, Global Customer Operations.

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