

Europ Assistance Group

Europ Assistance needed a way to foresee and prevent downtime and mission-critical service failures in its complex information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure. The company used NetIQ® Operations Center to link business services to its ICT infrastructure. Now the company can easily see single points of failure and assess the impact of downtime and can run simulations to reveal potential single points of failure. The solution helps the company to ensure better availability and customer satisfaction for key systems and prioritise maintenance.



Overview

Europ Assistance is a worldwide company that provides a range of insurance and assistance products for motorists, travelers and homeowners, including roadside assistance in Europe. The company's operation centre in Italy handles more than three million customer calls annually.

Challenge

Europ Assistance's customers rely on its services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, which in turn means Europ Assistance relies heavily on its information and communications technology (ICT) systems. In the event of a problem, the company must be able to rapidly restore normal service levels.

Europ Assistance uses numerous distinct systems and applications that are dependent on multiple technologies. The company lacked an

enterprise-level monitoring environment and relied on the knowledge and skills of its ICT team to keep things running smoothly, yet the ICT department did not understand in detail how the systems and business services interacted. Although the ICT team was resolving problems effectively, Europ Assistance couldn't accept the risk inherent in depending on the specific knowledge of a few individuals.

To ensure a more robust and reliable approach to managing internal and external service level agreements (SLAs), Europ Assistance wanted to dynamically link business services to its underlying ICT infrastructure and enable business-centric ICT operations.

Solution

Europ Assistance selected Operations Center as the key technology for a new business service management architecture based on the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) approach. The company worked with Hogwart, a leading Italian consultancy firm, to model its infrastructure in terms of its business services and to deploy Operations Center.

"For us, the really strong point about Operations Center is its openness and ease of integration with existing ICT services and ITIL processes," said Massimo Nichetti, Region One

"Operations Center is helping us make our services more robust, which ultimately means more reliable support for our customers."

MASSIMO NICHETTI

ICT Development Manager
Europ Assistance



At a Glance

■ Industry

Financial Services

■ Location

Europe

■ Challenge

Europ Assistance wanted to dynamically link business services to its underlying ICT infrastructure and enable business-centric ICT operations.

■ Solution

Use Operations Center to enable better visibility of services and improved real-time service-level control.

■ Results

- + Increased the reliability of customer services and support
- + Provided the ability to better understand the business impact of any failure or degradation of service in the infrastructure

“Operations Center enables us to understand in great detail the business impact of any failure or degradation of service in the infrastructure.”

MASSIMO NICHETTI
ICT Development Manager
Europ Assistance

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ICT development manager for Europ Assistance. “Operations Center enabled us to view our existing infrastructure in terms of the business services ICT offers—this means that business comes first and ICT adapts to it, not the other way around.”

In the first phase of the project, Hogwart and Europ Assistance created a catalogue of Europ’s business and technical services. Next, the combined team deployed Operations Center following the recommended methodology and integrated it with the existing monitoring system and helpdesk ticketing system. Operations Center can access data from the helpdesk ticketing system and present a summary of tickets for each element of the infrastructure across incident, problem and change categories.

The initial implementation took around six months to complete, at which point all Europ’s roadside assistance services were live on Operations Center.

By creating a clear link between the components of the ICT infrastructure and the business services they support, the solution enabled better visibility of services and improved real-time service-level control. It also helped the company prioritise system fixes and maintenance tasks. Europ Assistance can now see the potential impact of planned changes to its infrastructure. This visibility reduces risk and facilitates better communications between the business and ICT functions.

Results

With Operations Center and its service catalog, Europ Assistance can now clearly understand which business services depend on which hardware and software components and can see how outages will affect business.

“At ICT, it was previously difficult to identify potential single points of failure, because there was no clear mapping between the infrastructure and the business services,” said M. Nichetti. “Operations Center enables us to understand in great detail the business impact of any failure or degradation of service in the infrastructure,” said Mr. Nichetti. “We know which services will be affected by an outage, and we can prioritise fixes and maintenance accordingly.”

Europ Assistance can also use Operations Center to reveal potential weaknesses in the ICT infrastructure and to test planned improvements. Analysts can use a live sandbox that includes data coming in from the field or a static sandbox for pure simulations.

“Our customers and partners understand the language of business better than the language of IT, so it’s easier for everyone to think in terms of services,” said M. Nichetti. “Operations Center is helping us make our services more robust, which ultimately means more reliable support for our customers,” said Mr. Nichetti. “The solution also enables us to demonstrate to our business partners that ICT is managed to a very high standard in Europ Assistance.”



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