SFS services AG

Business Service Management as a Key Success Factor for SFS Services AG

Location
Switzerland

Industry
Manufacturing

Challenge
SFS services was faced with the challenge of adapting its services for the three operational Group companies to cope with the rapidly changing conditions of the modern business world and to link the IT infrastructure more closely with business processes.

Solution
As of today SFS services have in production Service Assurance (BMC Event Manager and BMC Performance Manager), BMC Atrium Configuration Management Database (CMDB) as the core of the whole IT infrastructure and BMC Configuration Automation. Next steps will be BMC Discovery, BMC Remedy Change Management Application, BMC Remedy Service Desk and BMC Service Impact Manager.

Results
> Cost allocation at the touch of a button

> Central data source for the whole IT infrastructure

> Improved options for guaranteeing business continuity

> Improved prioritising for troubleshooting after unforeseen occurrences

> Simpler monitoring of applications

> Simpler integration of amalgamated components after acquisitions

> Reduction in manual checks of interfaces

> Increased transparency for interfaces and better detection of interactions.

ItCONCEPTS
THE BSM COMPANY

SFS services AG provides central services for the whole SFS Group throughout the world. This includes IT as well as development and operation. Because almost all IT is concentrated at the head office in Switzerland, efficient resources and tools are needed to provide the various branches of the Group companies, both at home and abroad, with the necessary IT infrastructure. With Business Service Management solutions from BMC Software, this challenge was overcome with no problems at all.

The SFS Group is made up of the four SFS Group companies, SFS intec, SFS unimarket, SFS Locher and SFS services. SFS services is purely a service company with highly qualified specialists and is responsible for tasks that are common to the Group's operational companies. Combining these services in this way enables optimum use of synergies and ensures that the individual companies have professional support. SFS services' main tasks include financial management and accounting, personnel management, planning and organisation, marketing services, central services and the development and operation of the whole IT infrastructure.

The IT department at SFS services was faced with the challenge of adapting its services for the Group companies to cope with the rapid changes in the dynamic business world – while keeping the costs the same. A task with which a large number of similarly structured companies are confronted today. To solve this problem, IT manager Peter Biedermann's team decided to implement a business service management (BSM) strategy – a method that linked the IT infrastructure more closely with the business processes it was to support.

LOOKING FOR AN INTEGRATED TOTAL SYSTEM
Various considerations persuaded SFS services to introduce a BSM solution. Firstly, round the clock availability was an important factor: "Our branches all over the world are provided with IT services centrally from Switzerland and have only the minimum possible IT infrastructure. This naturally assumes that we can guarantee availability at all times," explained Peter Biedermann. "In addition, we need efficient tools, for example to install new software, so that operations run smoothly at all sites. Formerly we used various separate solutions as aids. But sometimes this left gaps, such as for software distribution as we have already mentioned."

Another point involved the whole charging system. Because the services provided by SFS services are charged to the respective Group companies, they needed a tool that would enable them to invoice the companies as easily and reliably as possible. Peter Biedermann added: "We didn't want a collection of different tools but rather a total system in which all the relevant information could be merged and available in a consolidated form." However, to do this it was necessary to set up an intelligent data nerve centre that would provide the necessary overview of all the IT components and could be used as a central source of information.

Based on these requirements, SFS services compiled comprehensive, detailed performance specifications with clear aims. Then SFS services agreed SLA's with the other Group companies and put the project out to tender. In the evaluation rounds with different suppliers, ITConcepts

with its BMC Software BSM approach was the most convincing. "ITConcepts' performance was very competent and professional," recalled Peter Biedermann. "We noticed immediately that the staff had a great deal of experience in implementing BSM strategies. And the BMC Atrium CMDB (Configuration Management Database) as the core for managing the IT infrastructure particularly impressed us by its flexibility and performance." For these reasons ITConcepts was also given the contract for the project.

SYSTEM MONITORING – SOFTWARE DISTRIBUTION – CHARGING CAPABILITIES

The whole project consisted of three sub-projects in total that were implemented at the same time. The BMC Performance Manager product suite was implemented for overall system monitoring. This guarantees optimum performance and availability of all services. It thus increases system availability by proactively warning staff of potential problems or events and reduces the time required for eliminating problems thanks to detailed information to locate problems rapidly and remedy them. In addition the suite reduces downtime to a minimum by automatic restoration measures to get services up and running again quickly and also reduces operating costs by simplifying management activities and automating redundant tasks.

The reason for the implementation of BMC Configuration Automation was based on the worldwide rollout of Windows XP within the SFS Group. "This worldwide conversion of XP required a powerful solution to automatically distribute the required software applications – Lotus Notes, MS Office as well as about 150 software packages," Peter Biedermann stated. In addition, the software development cycles for client/server applications are becoming shorter and shorter which requires new distribution mechanisms, to keep installation costs under control.

The configuration automation system records all IT assets and configurations within the SFS Group and provides accurate information on configurations and their documentation to support the other service management processes.

The third part of the project has a focus on BMC Remedy IT Service Management which supports SFS services by combining service desk, incident, problem, change, asset life cycle and service management applications and the CMDB with a single data model, a workflow platform and a user interface. This standardised approach offers proactive, continuous improvement in availability, quality and profitability of services in the complex company environments. The applications all use the integrated CMDB to co-ordinate processes using a single viewpoint just like technical components support company services.

"Especially for the inventory and the inter-company invoicing for the different services of the departments BMC Remedy ITSM is essential for us" as Peter Biedermann describes the advantages. "We always have transparency concerning the costs and can get the statements of our accounts at the push of a button. That saves us a lot of time and associated costs."

ABOUT THE SFS GROUP

The SFS Group, with a total of about 4,122 staff, had a turnover of CHF 1.334 billion in the 2007 financial year and is composed of four Group companies consolidated under SFS Holding AG: SFS intec is a highly-productive developer, manufacturer and component supplier partner of customer-specific precision moulded parts and special screws as well as system products for the construction industry. SFS unimarket is a specialist component supplier and logistics partner for products for fixing systems, tools and metal fittings as well as DIY products and serves customers from the industrial, craft and business sectors as well as wholesalers and retailers. SFS Locher supplies the main construction trade, steel manufacture and metal processing industry customers with reinforcement systems, construction tools and ready-made steel products. SFS Services is the internal group service provider for finance, controlling, IT, HR management, marketing services and central services and for planning and implementing large construction projects. For further information please see www.sfsholding.biz.

bmcsoftware

"Thanks to the introduction of the BSM strategy with the associated tools the worldwide conversion to Windows XP went off with no problems at all and took a fraction of the time that we would have needed before."

— Peter Biedermann
IT manager
SFS services AG

Products
> BMC Performance Manager
> BMC Event Manager
> BMC Configuration Management
> BMC Remedy IT Service Management
> BMC Atrium Configuration Management Database (CMDB)

Partner
ITConcepts Switzerland

About ITConcepts
ITConcepts is one of the leading Business Service Management (BSM) integrators in Switzerland, Germany, France, the Benelux countries and in Southern Asia. The company provides customer-specific consultancy products and technology solutions. With its "Strategic IT management" concept, ITConcepts uses certified methods (ITIL V3, ISO 20000) to move barriers between business processes and technology out of the way and make a strategic supplier of business-related benefits from the IT service providing organisation. For further information see www.itconcepts.ch.

About BMC Software
BMC Software delivers the solutions IT needs to increase business value through better management of technology and IT processes. Our industry-leading Business Service Management solutions help you reduce cost, lower risk of business disruption, and benefit from an IT infrastructure built to support business growth and flexibility. Only BMC provides best practice IT processes, automated technology management, and award-winning BMC Atrium technologies that offer a shared view into how IT services support business priorities. Known for enterprise solutions that span mainframe, distributed systems, and end-user devices, BMC also delivers solutions that address the unique challenges of the midsized business. Founded in 1980, BMC has offices worldwide and fiscal 2007 revenues of $1.58 billion. Activate your business with the power of IT. www.bmc.com.

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