WIND Hellas aligns technology services to business

With HP Business Service Management, enriched event notification improves visibility into technology management; faster time to repair and boosts availability to 99.999%

WIND

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>
> —Charis Tsevis, Senior Operations Manager, WIND Hellas, SA.

Objective

Optimize the management of an increasingly complex IT environment where recent evolutions include the unification of mobile, fixed and Internet services, and the integration of the IT environment from a fresh acquisition (Tellas); and tie corporate business systems to IT Services, so that managing the IT infrastructure (servers, storage, networks, applications, and databases) underpins goals for delivery of high quality IT Services

Approach

Continually evolve an HP BSM implementation to deliver the highest levels of service and availability for WIND's customer base

IT improvements

- Improved availability of mission-critical, real-time platforms to meet the 99.999% SLA
- IT Operations daily events down from 55,000 to 12,000
- System health check time reduced by 97%
- Enhanced and enriched the event notification environment to include application-focused alerts
- Defined and implemented better communication and escalation paths for incident management, resulting in:
  - Faster deployment of monitoring based on a set of standard and predefined policies, reducing the time to move a system into production from several days down to one
  - Reduced calls to standby engineers during the night by using proactive actions based on optimized thresholds within the standard monitoring templates
  - Deeper insight into application behavior, enabling more effective troubleshooting and improved service availability

Business benefits

- Stabilized operating expenses, while growing the IT infrastructure and the business
- Increased agility and flexibility when deploying new commercial products, enabling additional market share growth
- Better utilization and allocation of application engineers' man-hours, allowing increased innovation and faster time-to-market in releasing new products/services

Since its inception, WIND Hellas has been on a quite a journey—a journey comprised of new and enhanced services as well as the integration of several acquisitions—all while having to deliver superior service to their growing customer base. Established in 1992, WIND Hellas was the first company in Greece to be granted a license for the creation of a national mobile telephony services network, and established the first mobile call in the country. Since then, WIND Hellas has been involved in numerous activities which have required updates and enhancements to their IT environment as well as integration with other IT environments. Two significant and recent events highlighted the importance that industry-leading IT management technologies played in supporting the evolution of WIND's existing IT environment and the integration of additional IT components.

Athens Olympic Games

WIND knew that they would be in the public eye during the 2004 Olympic Games. There would be a large influx of people, international spectators and press, during the lead up to, and throughout the event—and they would be relying heavily on their mobile devices on a 24-hour basis. Undoubtedly this would place huge stress and demand on WIND's network, but also some opportunities. The result? WIND's decision to introduce, in 2002, a new innovative prepaid platform as well as advanced mobile services (MMS, GPRS, etc.). And these services went into production in February 2004—just 6 months before the start of the Athens Olympics.

## Major acquisition requires integration of two IT environments

In 2007, WIND acquired Tellas, a fixed telephony operator and Internet provider. Integrating two companies' IT environments is no simple task, but when their revenue streams are driven solely by technology it becomes the highest priority activity for the business. As the merging of Tellas' systems into WIND's accelerated, the number and complexity of systems and storage that needed to be monitored and managed grew dramatically. Managing the integration of the new systems without allowing service levels to degrade and costs to spiral out of control were significant challenges.

Unprecedented growth requires increased visibility into WIND's IT environment

As a result of these two major events, WIND Hellas grew their IT environment on an unprecedented scale. Between 2004 and 2010, they increased their systems from 104 to 295, grew their storage from 21 TB to 250 TB, and increased the number of their infrastructure monitors, based on HP Business Service Management (BSM) technologies, from 400 to 3,500. "The rapid increase in servers and storage—literally on an order of magnitude—necessitated increased visibility into our environment and thus an increase in the number of monitors that we needed. With them, we are now able to gain a better understanding of the health of our IT environment in about 5 minutes versus what used to take 3 hours," states Charis Tsevis, Senior Operations Manager, WIND Hellas, SA.

To support this dramatic growth, WIND moved to an environment comprised of two types of support service—Business Support Services (BSS) and Operations Support Services (OSS). BSS develops, supports, and implements all core business applications including billing, prepaid services, service provisioning, point-of-sale transactions, and fraud detection—all of which depend on CRM, ERP, and Data Warehousing systems. OSS provides proactive systems support and maintenance, 24 x 7 monitoring and reactive support, retail chain support

WIND Hellas' Rapidly Growing IT Environment

■ Storage (TB)
■ Systems (#)
■ Monitors (#, 10's)
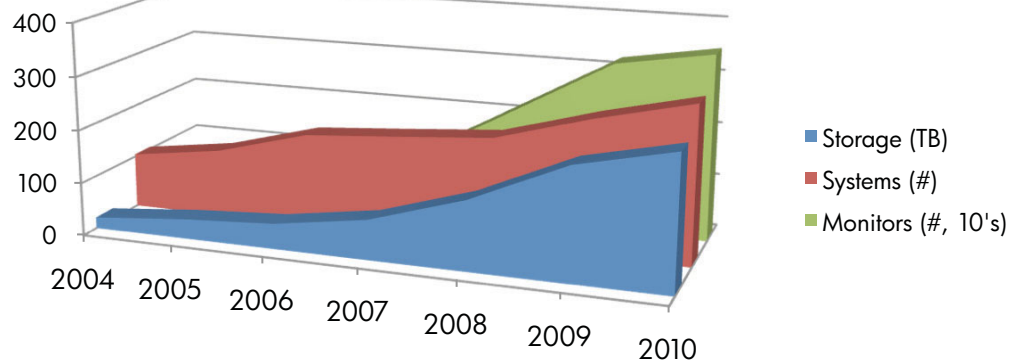
for 400 stores, provisioning of core infrastructure services, and infrastructure software implementation and configuration. This all relies on the use of real-time, highly-available systems that utilize advanced technologies, including virtualization. "We realized that the key to our success was to gain visibility and alignment of corporate business services to IT Services. By doing so, we now have an end-to-end view of our IT environment as well as our customers' end user experience," adds Charis. The solution? A BSM solution based on the leading tools available in the marketplace.

As WIND progressed through its journey from 2004 to 2010, it considered several vendors for its BSM needs and eventually chose HP. What were the factors that influenced this decision? HP's BSM products provided a complete solution, were strongly integrated, and provided a solid foundation from which to build out a comprehensive BSM solution to support WIND's current and future needs. Today, they are using a wide variety of tools from HP's BSM suite of products including HP Operations Manager for event consolidation and management, HP Network Node Manager for network monitoring, and HP Performance Manager for monitoring and managing the performance of their IT environment.
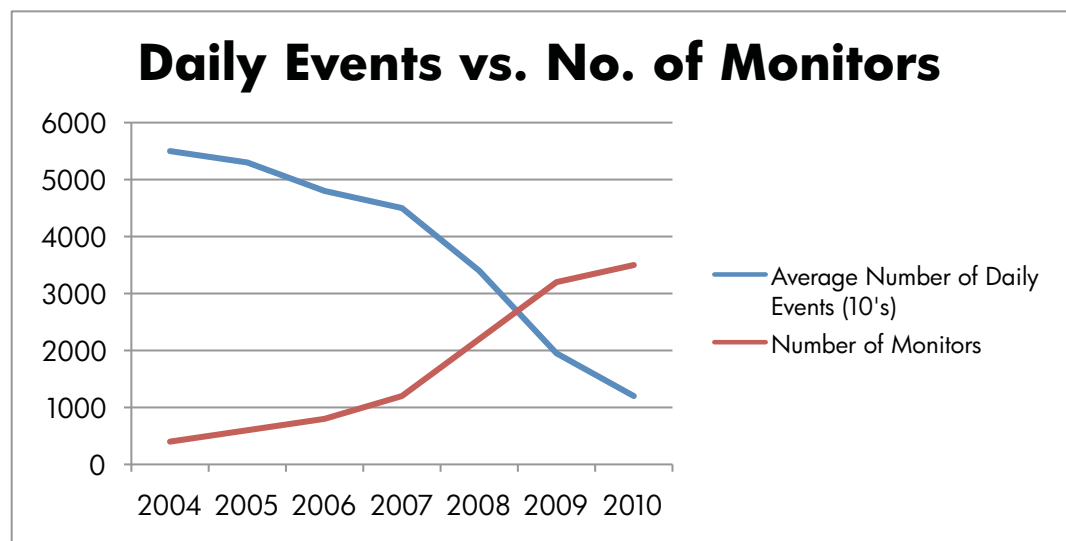
"Operations Manager acts as the 'single pane-of-glass' for our entire IT environment. Now many issues are identified and taken care of by OSS before they are sent to Subject Matter Experts (SME) for resolution. This frees up time for SMEs to work on more strategic activities—those that require their expertise—versus daily troubleshooting activities that the OSS can deal with," adds Charis.

WIND is also utilizing HP Operations Smart Plug-ins (SPIs) to further enhance their IT infrastructure monitoring capabilities. These SPIs assist in monitoring availability of specific applications, allowing for automatic discovery of these applications by HP Operations Manager, and sending alerts to Operations Manager if a pre-defined or user-defined threshold has been breached. Applications or technologies whose monitoring is enhanced through the use of SPIs include VMware, Oracle databases, WebLogic application servers, SAP, and Tuxedo.

Improved incident management reduces MTTR

After deploying these tools, WIND quickly realized significant operational and business benefits. An increase in the availability of their systems was directly attributable to WIND being able to easily connect their ITIL-based incident management process to detailed event monitoring provided by the HP BSM solution. Through the use of HP tools like HP Operations Manager and SPIs, WIND was able to integrate and enrich their event notification and incident management environment. This enabled WIND to improve the communication and escalation paths associated with incident management. "By using HP Operations Manager in conjunction with HP SPIs and providing better definition around incident management processes," states Charis, "we reduced Mean Time To Repair (MTTR) and increased availability to 99.999%."

In addition to increased availability, response times for problem resolution were reduced through "immediate checks" and "smart checks"—both of

Daily Events vs. No. of Monitors

Legend:
— Average Number of Daily Events (10's)
— Number of Monitors

X-axis: 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010
Y-axis: 0 to 6000

which are possible through the use of HP Operations Manager. These checks allow first-level engineers to deal with a larger percentage of events, and reduce the number of events sent to second-level engineers for diagnosis and remediation. The result? Second-level engineers now have more time to work on projects and strategic initiatives requiring their expertise—activities associated with enhancing existing business services and creating new ones to support business initiatives and drive revenue and profits.

Improved response times were also another added benefit of using HP Operations Manager in conjunction with SPIs. The number of events that first-level engineers had to deal with dropped on a daily basis. And how was this achieved? By requiring fewer events to be handled or dealt with by first-level engineers—through the use of features and functionality provided by HP Operations Manager like duplicate event suppression and closure of events associated with resolved issues. The ultimate business benefit was that headcount did not need to increase as WIND Hellas grew. Adds Charis, "Even though our company was growing very rapidly from 2004 to 2010, we were able to reduce the number of events that had to be handled on a daily basis from approximately 55,000 down to 12,000 and thus, did not have to increase headcount of our IT department." In addition to keeping operational expenses in check, other benefits of the improved response times were happier customers and a more productive staff within WIND Hellas.

Monitoring events from end user perspective

From HP's Application Performance Management (APM) suite of products, HP Business Process Monitor (BPM) and Real User Monitor (RUM) are used for end-to-end monitoring of transaction roundtrip times from retail shops to back-end systems. This allows WIND to measure core business transactions exactly as their end-users experience them. By doing so, they can see if there is a performance or availability issue with a customer-facing application and perform
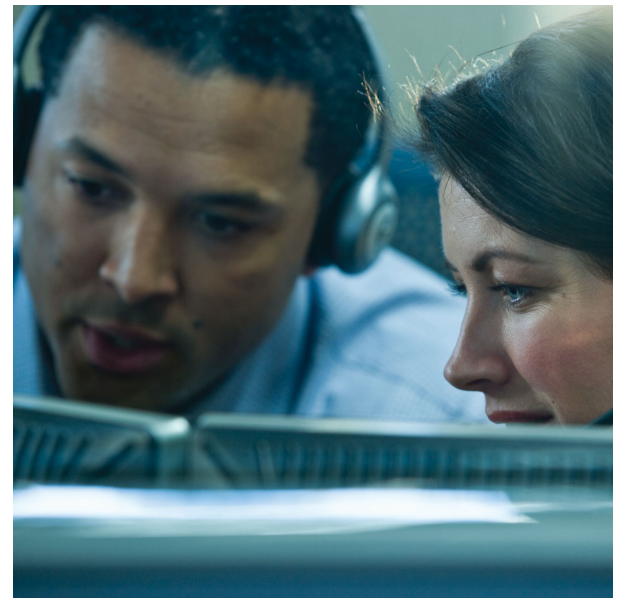
corrective actions in a more timely fashion and on a proactive basis—before it negatively impacts the end-user experience. This translates to higher revenue for WIND, as service availability increases, quality of service is improved, and the company image is enhanced. In addition, by using all of these tools together, WIND is now able to detect a higher number of fraud cases, thus reducing the amount of lost revenue due to illegal activities.

In conclusion, WIND Hellas is very satisfied with the success of its BSM implementation and sees a competitive advantage by using it. "The HP BSM solution that we currently have in place works so well that we've reduced the entire monitoring cycle from what used to be 3 hours to just under 5 minutes," states Charis. "In addition to improving service levels, this frees up a lot of our time to work on more strategic activities—providing new innovative services and enhancing our existing services—which provides us competitive advantages in the marketplace."

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