



Voice of the Customer Report

Discussion with Tony Asaro



Vendor



Product
SURVEYOR

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The INI Group Voice of the Customer Reports

IT professionals find real value in the experiences of other customers in order to help inform their buying decisions. The Voice of the Customer (VoC) program is designed to provide insightful information for IT professionals to understand different products and services. The INI Group is a consulting firm with expertise in data storage, disaster recovery, data management, security and virtualization and we work closely with our customers to provide the VoC service.

Background

Tony Asaro of the INI Group interviewed Rick Aherne, project manager in the desktop management area. This is how Rick describes his role:

“I am a project manager in the desktop management area. We take care of making sure that all those forty-five thousand machines are up-to-date with Microsoft security patches, the latest software; such as any kind of an upgrade to Adobe, Microsoft office; pretty much the core applications that would be on all PCs.”

The following is an overview of the Partners Healthcare IT environment:

- Network of 13 small to large hospitals
- Forty-five thousand PCs

Tony Asaro: Rick, thank you for joining us. Could you please start out by giving us a background on your company?

Rick Aherne: Partners Healthcare is a network of small to large hospitals in the Boston area. I think it's probably up to about twelve or thirteen hospitals at this point and they are some of the major hospital institutions around Boston including Mass General, Brigham and Women's and the Dana Farber.

Tony Asaro: And how many PCs do you have under management?

Rick Aherne: About forty-five thousand. It's growing anywhere from ten to twenty percent per year.

Tony Asaro: And what is your role with the company?

Rick Aherne: I am a project manager in the desktop management area. We take care of making sure that all those forty-five thousand machines are up-to-date with Microsoft security patches, the latest software such as any kind of an upgrade to Adobe, Microsoft office, pretty much the core applications that would be on all PCs.

Tony Asaro: Why did you decide to implement Verdiem Surveyor?

Rick Aherne: Well, it was kind of interesting. One of the guys that works in my group, he was reading an article and it said what the potential is for savings if some sort of a power saving for desktop tool was implemented. It was in the of probably fifty dollars per PC. He presented it to someone a few levels up in the organization, caught that person's interest and that person commissioned an intern to actually take a look at the hardware in the Partners' environment and do some sort of cost-saving analysis. He came to the conclusion that there was a lot of money that could be saved there, then it was turned over to me to actually start an evaluation of the various tools that were on the market.

Verdiem fit into that category along with a few other ones including the government's EZ GPO tool. We did an evaluation and head-to-head competition and decided that Verdiem was actually the best based on its ability to be managed through a graphical user interface.

Tony Asaro: As one person pointed out to me is that powering down the PCs is the easy part. It's bringing them back up gracefully that's the hard part in all of this.

Rick Aherne: We don't have to worry about waking them up if we use some sort of a tool that actually brings them awake during a certain time during the evening. It really made the ability to manage these machines with nightly updates much easier than it would have been.

Tony Asaro: What was the implementation process like? Did you go through a pilot phase and where are you now in terms of how many systems that you have managed by Verdiem today?

Rick Aherne: We went through a very detailed pilot stage. We did the IT side initially which is about fifteen hundred machines and then eventually we rolled it out to the rest of the organization. Right now we're up to thirty thousand desktops that have the Surveyor tool installed on them.

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Tony Asaro: And how long did it take you guys to roll out that many systems?

Rick Aherne: Once we got started and all the issues were ironed out, we had a very strong, high-level of confidence in what we were doing, that was producing the desirable result - we probably rolled out on the average of maybe five to ten thousand per week. We were aggressive once got everything ironed out in terms of the issues.

Tony Asaro: What has been the overall economic effectiveness of Verdiem in your environment?

Rick Aherne: We're looking at saving approximately a million dollars per year. The initial cost for the Verdiem licensing was cut in half because we applied for a grant from our local utility, NSTAR.

Tony Asaro: That's a great incentive as well.

Rick Aherne: It was tremendous. That, essentially probably cut the payback on the license investment to about three months.

Tony Asaro: You're going to get that cost savings year on year on year, right?

Rick Aherne: There's literally zero maintenance to it. There's just the occasional opting out of devices and that's basically it. It's been very well received and it started other initiatives within the Partners' organization.

Tony Asaro: Such as?

Rick Aherne: There's a lot more of a greening attitude. When we were announcing the initiative with Verdiem, we did a lot of PR [public relations], a lot of travelling road shows, posters, various ways of getting the word out. As far as what we were trying to do in terms of placing machines in standby.

Now there are organizations that are doing things like, they'll say, okay now let's do an office-supply sharing so that we're not over ordering. Let's bring all unused office supplies down into a conference room on a specific date and time and anything that you don't use that you don't think your group will use, bring down and there's probably something there that you will use. Therefore we don't have to think about wasting all these supplies that are just sitting there in the cabinet not being utilized. There's cutting down on paper cups, encouraging people to actually use mugs.

Tony Asaro: In a way this initiative with the PC power management acted as a catalyst to have a greener consciousness within the organization.

Rick Aherne: Yeah. I think that's exactly the case. I mean it was sort of the first thing in and once people realize that this is a tremendous way to go about saving money, the environment, all the positive aspects of cutting down on the power consumption then people started to get creative.

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Tony Asaro: What are the next steps with using Verdiem Surveyor?

Rick Aherne: Probably just expansion. We're talking about adding on additional machines, spreading it out to other hospitals that aren't currently utilizing Surveyor. That'll be the next step. We've maximized the involvement in the current hospitals that are participating in the strategy but there are other hospitals that we don't manage as closely but have been recently or somewhat recently been added onto the network so it's a question of having discussions with those hospitals and making a decision on whether or not they would like to participate as well.

Tony Asaro: Finally Rick, would you recommend Verdiem Surveyor to other IT professionals and give us insights as to why you would if you would?

Rick Aherne: I would definitely recommend it. It has produced close to the projected savings. It's been a very stable client on the desktop. What it's supposed to do, it actually does. And the way we configure the client, it functions exactly the way we need to have a power setting client function in our environment. In other words we need to have that client wake up machines during the middle of night so we can continue with the things that we had done prior to implementing power savings. There's actually no disruption in the way we go about doing our business of maintaining the desktops. It's allowed us to continue doing what we do but at the same time saving what I consider a tremendous amount of money.

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