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Consolidated Communications Gains Network Reliability and Improved Customer Service

with gen-E's Service Provider Solutions & Services

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Consolidated Communications, Mattoon, Illinois, USA - Provider of advanced communications services including local and long distance telephone, digital phone, high-speed Internet access and digital TV, residential and business customers in Illinois, Texas and Pennsylvania.

Challenge: Maintaining 24/7 uptime across its technologically advanced IP-based network, while delivering the highest levels of customer service.

Solution: gen-E's solutions and services help Consolidated prevent network downtime and loss of service; achieve enhanced internal collaboration and improved workflow; and drive a time savings of thousands of hours each year.

As a provider of advanced communications services to both residential and business customers in Illinois, Texas and Pennsylvania, Consolidated Communications (NASDAQ:CNSL) offers local and long distance telephone, digital phone, high-speed Internet access and digital TV over its technologically advanced IP-based network.

Maintaining 24/7 uptime across that network—as well as delivering the highest levels of customer service—is essential to the company's success, which is why it chose gen-E's to support its operations across the U.S. with gen-E's implementation of IBM Tivoli® Netcool® software, the company is able to prevent network downtime and loss of service to customers, while also achieving enhanced internal collaboration; improved workflow; and a time savings of thousands of hours each year to positively impact customer service.

With advanced network monitoring capabilities in place via the Tivoli® Netcool® platform, Consolidated can easily define a series of procedures, for automating a wide variety of business operations. These documented procedures also provide a place for Consolidated to centralize knowledge, making proven expertise available to employees on an on-demand basis. By creating a bank of intelligence that previously may have been scattered across a variety of departments, the company is able to speed customer response times and deliver greater value, both internally and externally.

Automation-Powered Customer Service

One of the most important uses for the Tivoli® Netcool® implementation is in helping Consolidated streamline troubleshooting for hundreds of front-line Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) staffing its U.S. call centers, which support Consolidated's DSL business. Making use of Tivoli® Netcool® automation capabilities, CSRs are empowered to solve issues quickly and efficiently, and with less escalation. Prior to gen-E, the company had built its own run book project to perform DSL line testing, but as Consolidated expanded by acquisition, the network operations center (NOC) team determined it needed a more robust way to automate the testing across a growing network.

In selecting gen-E as their solution provider, what Consolidated found was that most available solutions did not have a user interface that was suitable for use by its front-line CSRs, says Chris Smith, Consolidated's Senior Manager, Network Operations Center Tools and Automations.

"gen-E's implementation more than met our needs. It is an added plus we're able to leverage the expertise of our knowledge workers across the organization," Smith says. "When a CSR runs an automation for a customer, the system pulls information from many different sources and provides a high-level analysis of that information with warnings and corrective actions. It stores these results in a database, which allows our CSR's to go back and review the output of those automations. One of the best things about gen-E solution is that it provides a knowledge base where CSR's can search and find documentation created by our engineers and technicians."

Ease of Implementation

For Consolidated, gen-E began with a proof-of-concept implementation that provided the internal NOC team a better understanding of the software and its capabilities. Once they decided to work with gen-E, the gen-E experts came onsite and deployed the first automated procedure, and they have continued to offer support to the communications service provider as needed.

According to Smith, Tivoli® Netcool® integrates well with Consolidated's NOC environment. It runs on a Linux-based platform under the virtualization of VMware, with remote agents running on a variety of systems including Solaris and Linux.

Tivoli® Netcool® Generates Time & Cost Savings, Along with Fast ROI

Tivoli® Netcool® benefits Consolidated the most in the areas of collaboration and workflow automation. "Our 'library' now contains 234 automated procedures. That number will continue to grow because we are constantly identifying trends coming into the network

operations center (NOC) that make sense for automation," Smith says.

Tivoli® Netcool® is also used at Consolidated as a powerful notification engine, helping to significantly reduce IT and CSR response times. When an event within Tivoli® Netcool® occurs, the NOC can instantly send out an alert to an entire team of internal managers, field technicians, and even outside vendors to inform them of the issue.

In addition to the tremendous time savings previously noted, gen-E's services and solutions has delivered a 277% percent savings over what it would have cost to buy a competing solution, says Smith. "Our return on investment was realized in less than nine months," he adds.

gen-E - Scale Your Business, Not Your Infrastructure…

gen-E offers the most scaleable network and system solutions for service providers. We leverage innovative technologies such as IBM Tivoli® Netcool® and other solutions, so that our clients can scale their business without scaling their infrastructure.

Since 1999, gen-E has been a strategic partner to Service Providers, so we understand the enormous demands on your network and infrastructure systems. Our teams have a deep understanding of the incident resolution process from implementing over 50 service

management systems and over 100 event management systems for major corporations

To learn more about how gen-E can help you transform your business, please contact us at info@gen-e.com. For more information about gen-E, visit www.gen-e.com.