IBM

eGain broadens market reach with IBM and Linux.

Overview

- **Challenge**
  Industry-leading customer service software provider wanted to reduce the cost of ownership for its hosting infrastructure, while continuing to support open-source platforms

- **Why Become an On Demand Business?**
  eGain needed to respond to customer requests for further expanding its open-source platform support

- **Solution**
  eGain ported its hosted version to the open-source platform

- **Key Benefits**
  Projected savings of 5% on overall hosting costs; ability to provide additional open-platform choices to the customer base; savings on infrastructure and licensing fees

Some of the Web's most popular destinations rely on eGain's industry-leading software for scalable and intelligent management of customer service interactions.

In today's difficult business climate, companies continually look to provide differentiated service to help drive loyalty and profitable relationships with their customers. And with explosive growth in the use of online channels and the pervasiveness of communication devices, customers want convenient, multichannel service. In fact, customers often interact with companies through multiple channels to complete one logical service transaction.

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– Promod Narang, Vice President of Products and Technologies, eGain Communications Corp.

ON **DEMAND BUSINESS**™

On Demand Business Benefits

- Open, robust and low-cost Linux environment positions eGain for continued market growth
- Projected savings of 5% on overall hosting costs
- Easy, low-cost integration with existing infrastructure

"Using IBM solutions, we can quickly respond to our customers on demand, which is vital when dealing with mission-critical customer service."

– Promod Narang

Sunnyvale, California-based eGain Communications Corporation (eGain) is making it easier for companies to communicate with their customers by providing industry-leading applications for customer service and support. eGain (*www.egain.com*) serves an impressive list of Global 2,000 customers and has an operating presence in 18 countries. The company employs 400 people and has $22.1 million in annual revenue.

The company offers eGain Service 6, a comprehensive, integrated suite of customer service and contact center applications, available for in-house implementations or as a hosted service. eGain Service 6 is available on all major platforms and includes applications for multichannel contact center interaction management, Web self-service, knowledge management, service process design, case/task management, service fulfillment and contact center performance management.

eGain wanted to increase its market reach by supporting the open-source platform. The company identified this as an opportunity to make its solutions integrate seamlessly with business systems of clients using open-source technologies. "We take input from our clients seriously," says Promod Narang, vice president of products and technologies at eGain. "And they were making it clear that they wanted us to expand our offerings on the Linux platform. Further, by using open source-based technology, we can deliver our products to a new client base, which was not available to us before."

Creating flexible deployment options

eGain needed to respond to customer requests for further expanding its open-source platform support — allowing the company to tap more deeply into this market.

As part of its strategy to support open-source platforms and make it easier to integrate with existing business systems, eGain ported its solution to the Linux platform. The solution allows customers using Linux to seamlessly integrate with Service 6 applications to run their day-to-day contact center operations — experiencing the ease of use, management and integration that the platform affords.

With the new solution, Linux-based customers now have the option of implementing a comprehensive and proven applications suite in-house or as a hosted option. Additionally, eGain's Linux support allows customers with existing Linux-based business systems to more easily integrate them with eGain's solutions.

Creating an enhanced IT infrastructure

To provide its hosted solutions on Linux, eGain approached systems integrator and IBM Business Partner STA America, a management and IT consulting firm. Specializing in IBM hardware and software adapted for Linux, STA America provided support for eGain's IT infrastructure design and deployment. The systems integrator selected Red Hat Linux running on an IBM @server® xSeries® 440 system as a scalable foundation for the hosted offering. And with an outstanding price/performance ratio, eGain can provide a high-value hosted offering to its customers, while optimizing its margins. "STA America indicated that xSeries would offer the flexibility we need to support our growing hosting business, and it was right," notes Narang.

STA America installed and tested the servers, and provided training. Samir Mukadam, senior director of product management at eGain, says, "With the x440 system and Linux, our hosted customers are spared the time and expense of deploying their own hardware solutions. They get rapid implementation and time-to-market benefits, which allow them to focus on their core business."

IBM technology empowers On Demand Business

eGain relies on database technology, which runs on the x440 system, to manage its client data, including product information and knowledge database articles, which customer service agents can access from their desktops.

In a typical hosted scenario, eGain's clients upload knowledge base data to eGain's servers on a scheduled basis, with IBM WebSphere® MQ providing the messaging transport that connects the database with a customer's service center. "Using IBM solutions, we can quickly respond to our customers on demand, which is vital when dealing with mission-critical customer service," says Narang.

With support for Linux and WebSphere software, eGain can offer its clients the convenience of robust server and software technology that is scalable and easy to integrate across platforms, from laptops to mainframes. eGain can use the XpandOnDemand functionality of the x440 system to increase processing capability as needed. The system is expandable up to 16-way symmetric multiprocessing, so eGain only purchases the processing, memory and I/O capability it needs — when it needs it. "The scalable architecture of the x440 has really helped us to get the most from our IT dollars," says Narang. "Contact center applications are mission-critical and in a hosted environment, you must have flexibility and the ability to expand. With the x440 system, we have a well-defined growth path for our systems."

Key Components

Software

- IBM WebSphere MQ
- Red Hat Linux

Servers

- IBM @server xSeries 440

Business Partner

- STA America

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"In addition to being able to respond to a broader sector of the market, we're benefiting from reduced software licensing costs for our hosting business, as compared to other operating environments," Narang continues. "And, the reliable xSeries systems provide high availability."

Riding the cutting edge

Satisfied with its new solution, eGain is considering IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for Linux as the information management foundation of its hosted service. In addition, eGain now sees IBM @**server** BladeCenter™ systems in its future. "We have had a long and fruitful relationship with IBM," says Narang. "We want to extend our investment in IBM technology and are interested in the BladeCenter systems as an effective solution to host several applications on one system."

eGain set out to expand its product offerings and by utilizing IBM technology and Linux, it has expanded its market reach while lowering infrastructure costs. "Linux will help lower the TCO for customers with in-house implementations, as well as hosted deployments," says Narang.

Narang concludes: "With IBM's support, we will continue to strengthen our marquee customer base, while achieving infrastructure cost savings in our hosted business."

For more information

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