Software Provider Streamlines Inventory Management

IVY Comptech Combines Cisco Smart Net Total Care and Smart Call Home for Ideal IB Management

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IVY Comptech
• Andhra Pradesh, India

Business Challenge
• Eliminate need for time-consuming manual inventory process
• Accelerate time for faulty device replacement
• Help ensure full IB visibility to avoid potential problems, and speed problem resolution when issues do occur

Network Solution
• Cisco Smart Net Total Care

Business Results
• improved Cisco TAC interaction through access to more complete and accurate IB information
• Considerable time savings via SNTC automation
• Problem avoidance has contributed to immeasurable cost savings

Business Challenge

IVY Comptech is a leading software product development company, headquartered in India. The company provides outsourced technical business services to its customers. Specializing in game design, and using advanced technology, IVY helps its clients with transaction processing, workflow management, analytics, business intelligence, and affiliate support systems. Additionally, its customers can also rely upon IVY for fast developmental decisions based on proprietary analytic tools.

As a technology service provider, IVY Comptech places a distinct focus on solving problems through technical innovation. However, when it came to managing its installed base (IB) of network equipment, it still relied upon a manual methodology to determine the current state of its inventory.

So, while the company was investing considerable time in trying to stay on top of its IB, the time spent was not yielding the benefits it hoped to achieve.

IVY Comptech asked Cisco if it could recommend a better solution.

Network Solution

Cisco had the ideal solution for IVY Comptech to improve its IB management process in Cisco® Smart Net Total Care combined with Cisco Smart Call Home. Smart Net Total Care provides a single installed base management solution, including service contract management, foundational technical services, and device diagnostics, plus security and other alert notifications for Cisco products. Using its ability for detailed discovery of Cisco branded network devices, the service offers actionable intelligence and proactive support capabilities that can reduce operating costs and minimize downtime.

Smart Call Home is already embedded with Smart Net Total Care, so unlocking its value is easy. Smart Call Home uses a proactive service approach to avoid network downtime by enabling devices to perform diagnostics on their own components, and then provides customers with real-time alerts or remediation advice when an issue is detected.

"If there is a hardware failure detected in the network, Cisco Smart Call Home clearly helps identify the problem and automatically raises a TAC case, including details of the part's code, the serial number of the device, the type of support provided, and the address where the device is located. This eradicates many steps in the support process, which has improved overall turnaround time."

Tijo Jose, Senior IT Manager

Business Results

After installing Smart Net Total Care, IVY immediately saw numerous areas for network improvements using reports accessible in the software's portal. For example, 125 devices were found to have Cisco IOS® Software versions that were out-of-date. 90 hardware devices were facing end of life (EoL) or end of service (EoS). 200 hardware devices were identified with different severity levels of security vulnerability. Through understanding network vulnerabilities, IVY was positioned to take proactive steps to address potential issues before problems occurred.

Following deployment of Cisco Smart Net Total Care, IVY turned to installation of Cisco Smart Call Home, starting with 11 critical network devices. Again, IVY saw immediate results. Previously, monitoring the network for problems was difficult. Considerable time was needed to log into the network, determine if a problem existed, generate an alert and contact the Cisco TAC if one was detected, search for the device information, request a Return Materials Authorization (RMA), and wait for a part delivery.

With Smart Call Home in operation, these steps are eliminated and the shipment turnaround time is significantly shorter. It can automatically detect a hardware problem, create a service request with detailed device information, determine its location, and notify IVY of the incident via email. The part is then shipped to the customer. Previously 2-3 days would be required before shipment. That time has been reduced to 5-6 hours. Not only does Smart Call Home save IVY considerable time, it also reduces exposure to network risk without the need for direct customer intervention.

Smart Call Home's demonstrated its benefits shortly after the company registered its network equipment. A device port was improperly configured and sending an unintended Bridge Protocol Data Unit (BPDU). BPDUs are the messages exchanged between switches to calculate the spanning tree topology. In a valid configuration, fast-enabled ports do not receive BPDUs. Receiving a BPDU on a fast-enabled port means an invalid configuration, such as the connection of an unauthorized device. The BPDU guard feature puts the port in the error-disabled state.

Cisco Smart Call Home automatically determined that the port was not working, created a service request, and put the RMA process in motion to speed equipment replacement.

The savings to IVY in time and resource costs through incident avoidance is incalculable according to the company's Senior IT Manager, Tijo Jose, "We're avoiding a significant number of incidents even before they occur!"

With Cisco Smart Call Home, all the essential data is automatically generated for fast problem resolution, such as the time a problem occurred. Before, an alert might be ignored or not even known. Smart Call Home helps catch problems earlier, shorten mean time to resolution (MTTR), and contribute to a healthier network environment. IVY plans to soon register an estimated seventy additional devices.

Jose elaborated on the reason why, "If there is a hardware failure detected in the network, Cisco Smart Call Home clearly helps identify the problem and automatically raises a TAC case, including details of the part's code, the serial number of the device, the type of support provided, and the address where the device is located. This eradicates many steps in the support process, which has improved overall turnaround time."

The combination of Cisco Smart Net Total Care with Cisco Smart Call Home has proven to be the perfect solution for complete management of the customer's installed base. The proof is in the results:

1. Time Savings

With full network visibility available through use of Cisco Smart Net Total Care and the power of Cisco Smart Call Home to automatically detect problems, IVY can spend considerably less time trouble-shooting issues and waiting for their resolution, and focus more time on the strategic requirements for successful network operations.

2. Faster MTTR

Through elimination of manual steps and the addition of smart services automation, issues are more easily detected, critical device information is readily available, and TAC interactions are facilitated for fast problem resolution and parts replacement.

3. Cost savings

The previous inventory methodology required dedication of valuable IT resources. Now the complete network inventory is available at the click of a button. Further, the wealth of detailed information provided by Smart Net Total Care reduces TAC time, while Smart Call Home contributes to cost avoidance by preempting problems before they can occur. IVY understands that time is money, so time saved is money earned.

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Smart Net Total Care, go to:
www.cisco.com/go/total

And to learn more about IVY Comptech, visit:
www.ivycomptech.com

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