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*- Jack Herklotz
IT Operations Director
Watermark Retirement
Communities*

How "WATERMARK CONNECT" FINALLY CONNECTED WITH ITS ASSOCIATES

With twenty-four retirement communities in fifteen states under management, Watermark Retirement Communities Corporation knows that training, informing, and motivating their workforce is a top priority and a competitive differentiator. To help with these tasks Watermark created its own "Watermark Connect" system, a proprietary, web-based employee portal that delivers management information, tools, online training, best practices and resources to the Watermark Communities' associates. Because it's Internet-based, Watermark Connect ensures that all personnel can access the appropriate tools and resources they need, when they need them, regardless of where they are located.

"In order to support our associates, a centralized information resource such as our Watermark Connect system is essential. We must make sure that all of our associates are current on government requirements, training, and corporate information", said David Barnes, CEO, Watermark Retirement Communities, "Technology is at the heart of supporting this effort."

The Problem: Slow Performance on Fast Infrastructure

Since Watermark envisioned that their 4,500 associates would use the Watermark Connect system often, the company invested in high-end servers and high-speed networking equipment to ensure the responsiveness of the system. The use model had associates logging into the Connect system, getting information, downloading it, and then using it for their daily work. However, even with the fast infrastructure, early versions of the system were too slow to keep the associates engaged and uptake of the new system lagged.

"We were seeing even basic operations with the system, for instance navigating through the various menus, taking longer than they should to complete," said Jack Herklotz, Director of IT Operations. "When associates had a number of pressing responsibilities, a slow interface would often frustrate them and they would abandon using the system - erasing the entire reason why we installed it in the first place. We knew the issue had to be addressed."

The Connect system used a combination of Microsoft technologies on the back-end, including SharePoint and SQLServer. Initially thinking that the issue was purely one of application configuration, the Connect team brought in a few software developers with experience in Microsoft technologies to try to speed it up. However, simply focusing on these applications did not deliver substantial improvement.

"Although we employed top-notch people to optimize our SharePoint and SQLServer applications, we did not feel the improvement extracted all of the speed that the servers could provide," said Herklotz, "My boss, the CEO, knew that we could achieve more. I agreed and began to look for an approach beyond simple application optimization."

The Solution: Veloxum's Server Optimization Service (SOS)

Herklotz decided to try Veloxum and their Server Optimization Service (SOS). "Veloxum's quick turn-around and performance guarantee made them a logical choice. They stated that the consultation would be free if they could not show improvement within 5 business days. We wished other consultants had that kind of guarantee."

Veloxum's SOS starts with the installation of Veloxum's own server optimization soft-

CASE STUDY

Veloxum Server Optimization Service (SOS), Watermark Inc.

About Veloxum

Veloxum was founded with the vision to apply active and continuous optimization to manage complex IT environments for optimum performance. The Veloxum team has a combined industry experience of over 80 years and cover the disciplines of networking, servers, applications, operating systems and high speed data transfer. Individually, they designed some of the most advanced WAN, LAN and Fibre Channel analyzers available today. The team incorporated this knowledge into the first optimization solution to attack the problem of resource contention at the physical and virtual layers of infrastructure and applications.

About the Service

Veloxum's Server Optimization Service (SOS) utilizes Veloxum-trained technicians who deploy Veloxum's own software to actively and continuously optimize physical infrastructure, virtual infrastructure, and application settings to maximize performance, increase workload density, and minimize virtualization costs. SOS works on existing systems and tunes the various components within manufacturer supported settings. The service enables IT organizations to dramatically reduce CAPEX and OPEX spending, and simultaneously improve performance.

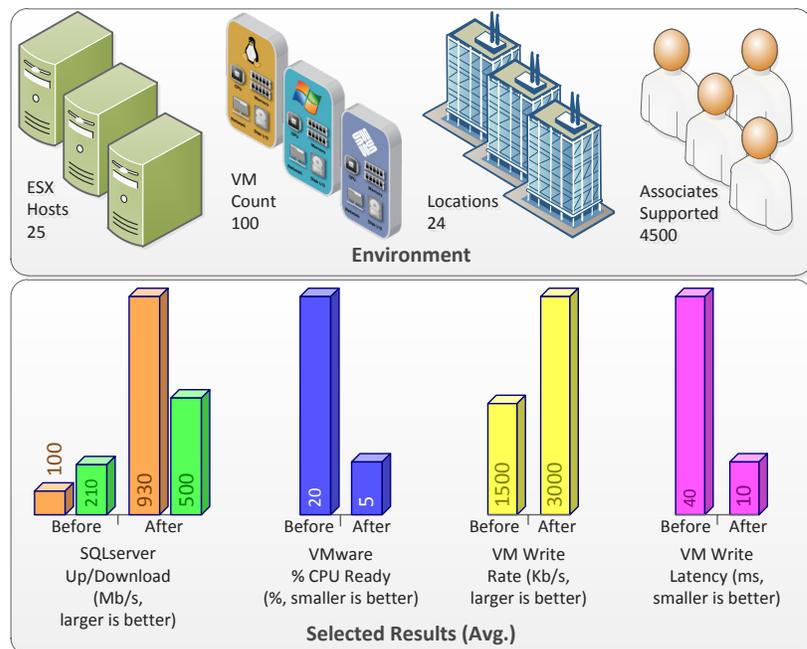
ware, Veloxum for Enterprise, with its Active Continuous Optimization (ACO) technology. Herklotz instructed the Veloxum consultant to first speed up the SharePoint server. The Veloxum software's client immediately began reporting performance data for Sharepoint connections from across the infrastructure.

"Veloxum's software's ability to run performance tests across all of our infrastructure - not just the applications - gave us instant visibility as to the location of our bottlenecks. The Veloxum team had no problem recommending vendor-supportable configuration changes that helped us triple our SharePoint speed. According to our users, the speed went from 'slow' to 'Wow!'"

The Veloxum consultant then focused on SQLServer performance. Simply using Veloxum optimization software provided some improvement, but the Veloxum consultant went deeper. Using clues provided by the software, the Veloxum consultant found that a previous technician had turned off the SQLServer's write cache and, separately, that the SAN had three bad cables that caused intermittent traffic errors. Resolving these issues and using the Veloxum software's recommendations increased SQLServer's average throughput by 40% and decreased average latency by 30%.

"We wholeheartedly endorse Veloxum's Server Optimization Service," said Herklotz, "We especially like that the service includes a copy of the Veloxum for Enterprise software as part of the package. Now that we know its capabilities, we can find and solve our own performance issues and get the most from our IT infrastructure investment."

Quick Facts: The Results



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