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Nebraska Machinery Manages Remote Systems and Cuts IT Costs With BOSS DiagWin IT Asset Management

NORCROSS, GA. (September 19, 2005) — In a recent case study, Microsoft reports Nebraska Machinery Company, a Caterpillar® heavy equipment sales and service provider, recently upgraded 450 workstations at 11 distributed locations in a single weekend by using DiagWin Professional, an IT asset management and software deployment solution. According to the case study, Nebraska Machinery has simplified systems management processes and improved support of its large group of workstations — using only four IT personnel and DiagWin. As a direct result, the company saved more than \$60,000 in annual personnel expenses, reduced IT maintenance costs by 30 percent, and increased revenue by 15 percent.

Nebraska Machinery Company has 450 workstations distributed throughout its 11 locations in Nebraska and Iowa. The company uses Microsoft software and various proprietary applications required by Caterpillar to support financial, customer relationship management, and parts and service operations.

Until recently, installing applications and updates was an arduous, time-consuming task. One of the four IT staff members at the headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, had to drive to each remote location—some of which are hundreds of miles away—and install software manually. “We had to travel and then wait there until the installation was completed,” says John Dickmeyer, Director of Technology at Nebraska Machinery. “For a Microsoft Office application upgrade, we’d have to spend two to three days at a given store and hit every computer that we could.”

If an IT staff member could not physically access each workstation, the company would mail CDs to the remote locations and have the users install the software themselves. But this also was inefficient. “Typically, users would have problems loading the application, or the CDs would be lost or damaged,” Dickmeyer says. He estimates that an upgrade of all 450 workstations would take weeks to complete.

To help companies like Nebraska Machinery simplify systems management, BOSS developed DiagWin Professional. Companies use the solution to quickly and easily inventory computer assets, deploy client software, and install updates from a single console.

After meeting BOSS at a CAT vendor trade show, Nebraska Machinery chose BOSS for help with its application upgrades. “I saw a DiagWin demo there, and I immediately knew it was what we needed,” says Dickmeyer. “The product basically sold itself. We liked the solution’s ability to inventory each computer in our company, which was always a problem for us. We also were impressed by the ability to automate deployment of updates.” Nebraska Machinery installed DiagWin in July 2004 and began realizing benefits almost immediately.

According to Dickmeyer, the primary benefit of DiagWin is its ability to simplify the software deployment process to the company’s 11 locations. Nebraska Machinery no longer needs IT staff or computer users to install software manually on each workstation. “Because DiagWin is completely automated, it works almost like an on/off switch,” says Dickmeyer.

Nebraska Machinery recently upgraded all 450 workstations to Microsoft Office Basic Edition 2003. “We chose DiagWin to install the package, and were able to do that in one step over a weekend,” Dickmeyer says. “We installed it remotely with DiagWin and had no problems at all.”

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DiagWin also helps the company quickly install important updates that can affect system security.

"Now, if we have a virus outbreak or if a security patch is released, we can build a package in DiagWin and send it out to everyone immediately," says Dickmeyer.

To install software such as a service pack, DiagWin can automatically download the software using Microsoft Software Update Services, or simply launch an automated deployment script pointing to applications stored on the server. Then a company's network administrator approves and deploys the software to every computer that needs it with the click of a button. Customized deployment scripts include any required registry settings or configuration changes, such as opening and closing ports.

"Using DiagWin, companies can deploy packages, applications, and service packs to all locations simultaneously," says Vish Ramakrishnan. "They can save money and travel time to see an immediate return on investment, and reduce the ongoing costs of supporting out-of-date software."

DiagWin also includes a software and license management feature including exception reporting for available versus installed licenses, and usage metering to determine how frequently an application is used. "This means that if someone isn't using a product, DiagWin can be used to uninstall that license and reallocate it to another computer where it will be used," Vish Ramakrishnan says. "That way, a company can save on licensing costs, and identify any unlicensed applications to prevent costly liabilities resulting from noncompliance."

With DiagWin's remote management capability, Nebraska Machinery has been able to reduce the time its IT staff spends on help-desk requests and traveling to remote locations to install software. "Before, we had to write down their problem and tell them we'd get back to them," Dickmeyer says. "Now, since we have an installer package built for troubleshooting scenarios, we've decreased hours from our workday because we don't have to run to individual workstations anymore."

"When we had to send someone out on the road, we would lose that resource from the department for an extended period of time," says Dickmeyer. DiagWin, however, provides a more efficient solution. "In terms of IT maintenance, we've probably reduced our workload and time spent by 20 to 30 percent with DiagWin."

Nebraska Machinery has been able to reallocate one full-time employee by using the solution, thanks to the time saved on installation and travel. "Including salary and benefits, that's \$60,000–70,000 annually that can be used elsewhere within the company," says Dickmeyer.

In addition, Nebraska Machinery uses DiagWin to help its customers save money. "If I need to update a program that we use to fix a customer's \$500,000 machine sitting in our service shop, I can do it immediately," he says. "That provides a huge reduction in time and cost that we can pass on to that customer because we can accomplish that task in minutes rather than days. Situations like that occur on a monthly basis."

Overall, Dickmeyer reports that Nebraska Machinery has reduced its IT maintenance costs by 30 percent and increased revenue an estimated 15 percent since deploying DiagWin.

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About Nebraska Machinery Company

Nebraska Machinery Company and its various divisions employ over 500 employees and provide a comprehensive line of products and services that cover a very diverse customer base including construction, industrial, agricultural and material handling. As we grow, Nebraska Machinery Company will continue to focus on helping our customers grow and operate more profitably.

About BOSS

Business Oriented Software Solutions, Inc. (BOSS) is a global infrastructure management firm specializing in IT lifecycle management, comprehensive asset management, network services, software solutions, and technical support. Our forte is optimizing enterprises but our genuine concern is you, the customer. By listening to you, BOSS enterprise solutions enable you to leverage your infrastructure management, business processes, and overall performance. BOSS exceeds your expectations by providing industry expertise, software customization and a stellar support help desk.