

A FORSYTHE CASE STUDY

Wide Area Network (WAN) Simulation/Assessment

A Tier 1 Automotive Supplier

Business Challenge

Responding to a mandate to cut its IT operating costs, a Tier 1 automotive supplier was considering a server consolidation initiative. The company was running two separate data centers, approximately 500 miles apart, one of which supported a manufacturing plant nearby. The company asked Forsythe to assess the feasibility of consolidating the servers from the two data centers, and building a wide area network (WAN) to connect the consolidated data center with the manufacturing plant 500 miles away. The company needed to determine whether or not they had the bandwidth to make the move.

Solution

Forsythe first assessed the company's current environment. Its mission-critical applications were primarily older, Oracle-based programs containing heavy graphics user interface (GUI) code. In addition, the company had written many customized programs to parse data. All of these programs used a significant amount of bandwidth—the company needed to know to what extent. In particular, it needed to know how much data being carried between the manufacturing plant and the servers supporting it.

Forsythe then created a simulated WAN, and placed the servers in question on simulated remote access. Forsythe measured how the WAN performed at different access-speeds to determine its threshold of effectiveness. Formulas were used to simulate the effects of a 500-mile connection. The goal was to find a happy medium between performance and required access-speed, for optimal cost-management.

The assessment was conducted over four weeks. During the first week, network traffic was measured—in terms of amount and type—within the current environment. Over the next three weeks, traffic was measured along the simulated WAN link, based upon different utilization scenarios.

Results

Based upon the WAN simulation/assessment, Forsythe determined that the company's network would support the server consolidation, but that the costs for 500 miles of WAN link would outweigh the savings provided by consolidation. The most cost-effective solution proved to be the one already in place. Therefore, as a result of the assessment, the company was able to avoid an unnecessary major expense.

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