The Plane Truth: SyAM System Area Manager Improves Operational Efficiencies, IT Response Time

On-Time Arrivals Not the Only Measure of On-Time Performance

SmartLynx Airlines

For the world's global air carriers maintaining their equipment is directly related to ensuring passenger satisfaction. That's true whether a fleet aircraft is awaiting its service check prior to its next departure or watching over the IT systems that enable the carrier to fully support its equipment, meet its on-time requirements and satisfy its internal customers.

"Just as a mechanic proactively surveys the condition of the plane to ensure it can safely fly, our IT support team must be able to react rapidly and effortlessly in managing the systems that support the airline," said Oskars Lascuks, IT Administrator for Latvia-based SmartLynx Airlines.

As a practical matter, maintaining optimum visibility and control over the carrier's infrastructure investments parallels Lascuks' aircraft mechanic counterpart's efforts in Latvia, London(UK), Manchester(UK) and Prague (Czech Republic) to ensure the safety of SmartLynx's fleet of 10 Airbus 320-200 and 2 Boeing 767-300.

However, unlike his aviation mechanic counterparts in other parts of the globe, Lascuks' IT services team - which is located exclusively in Latvia - had meant that any user issues that developed remotely could not be solved remotely.

"Ours was a reactive type of management typically limited to freeing up space on Hard Disk Drive (HDD) or loading Random Access Memory (RAM). If a user developed a problem beyond that, it almost always required me or one of my team to go on-site in order to properly diagnose and remedy their problem, often at great expense," explained Lascuks. "We had some experience in using Windows remote assistance to facilitate and solve user problems but, over time, it proved impractical. We needed an alternative."

"With SyAM System Area Manager we now have the ability to connect and manage all of our systems with fewer resources, and thanks to the rich and intuitive V4 dashboard, the solution was easy to implement and use."

-Aleksandrs Mortulevs
SmartLynx Airlines
IT Director

Global Visibility, Localized Solutions

Together with his team Lascuks actively maintains and manages an infrastructure inventory consisting of 45 desktops, 8 workstations, 11 servers (six physical, and five virtual using VMWare) and a pair of firewalls supporting a mix of Windows XP Pro, Vista Business, Server 2003 SP2 R2 64 and 32 Bit and Linux CentOS 5.

In evaluating potential vendors to support his remote management requirements Lascuks developed a "must-have" list of solutions consistent with his needs and those of SmartLynx Airlines.

"The vendor we selected had to provide us with the ability to see the status of our managed equipment, including software and hardware inventory as well as warning of potential issues," said Lascuks. "We also wanted to install software controls and an automated network scanner for connected devices. And finally - and perhaps most importantly of all - because our remote clients typically needed to connect over a VPN network before we could help them, we required a vendor that, ideally, supported remote assistance and diagnosis resolution from a local console."

Lascuks found what he was looking for when he researched Intel® Active Management Technology (Intel® AMT) on the web. Using built-in platform capabilities and popular third-party management applications, Intel vPro allows IT to remotely isolate and recover systems after OS failures, while alerting and event logging helps reduce downtime.

Within days he contacted SyAM Software, a partner in Intel's vPro solution and, in its own right, a leading provider of system area management tools that enable IT administrators to remotely and effectively manage their multi-vendor systems.

Coincidentally, SyAM had just released version 4 of its System Area Manager and System Client solution. For Lascuks Version 4's enhanced management of system and power management assets, user-defined filtering and reporting tools and intuitive and system-sensitive dashboard, proved especially compellingly. At a much higher level System Area Manager provided Lascuks and his entire team access to a visual and powerful real-time representation of his entire infrastructure inventory - locally, as well as globally.

Lascuks quickly commissioned a proof of concept, resulting in unprecedented levels of faster response time and higher levels of service to users.

"We now have the ability to connect to fewer systems at one time and react to problems proactively," explained Lascuks. "There are fewer system resources required and, thanks to the V4 dashboard, the solution was easy to implement and use. It also proved affordable based on the features offered."

Driving Down Costs, Reducing Air Miles and Eliminating On-Site Visits. Lascuks also cites increased system availability, improved accountability, maximized system resource utilization and reduced total cost of ownership as benchmarks that, for him, defined the SyAM solution.

For Lascuks one of the most value-added outcomes to implementing SyAM System Area Manager and System Client (v4) is his ability - and that of his team - to provide remote assistance to aircraft maintenance users outside Latvia, significantly reducing, among other things, travel expenses.

"Prior to SyAM 80% of all help desk calls required on-site travel to evaluate and solve user problems. That required a lot of time spent in the air as well as on the ground to diagnose a single user's issue. Operationally speaking, it was also inefficient since that singular issue reduced the chance of our help desk technicians to multitask among many users," said Lascuks. "With SyAM firmly in place, 90% of all help desk calls can be solved from my own desk with a few clicks of the mouse. As a result, I can support a number of users simultaneously, optimizing resources and saving travel time. And, after all, time is money."

Lascuks realized immediate value and discovered, to his satisfaction, that SyAM capably met each of the technical attributes he had hoped to find in a remote management system vendor.

"From the first hours we went live with System Area Manager we quickly realized its value as a way to control and reduce our operating expenses and improve relationships with our users. There was a dramatic reduction in on-site, desk side visits, in deploying patches and applications, in power usage and unplanned downtime, everything we hoped for when we first set out to identify a vendor."

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Ultimately, Lascuks credits SyAM Software and its System Area Manager's remote management, alerts and innovative dashboard features in providing him with the tools he needs to keep pace with the technical requirements of the carrier's internal users.

"As an emerging air carrier with an increasingly larger global footprint, centralized management of resources and systems enables our IT management team to keep on top of and ahead of our user's needs," said Lascuks.

He added, "Ensuring the uptime and safety of our equipment is the responsibility of our mechanics. Supporting their needs as rapidly and as seamlessly as possible is the responsibility of the IT team and by using SyAM System Area Manager we are confident we will regularly exceed our users' expectations for 'on-time' performance."

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SmartLynx Airlines operates under its own Latvian AOC. Latvia is an JAA approved country and the AOC is thus in compliance with JAR OPS 1. We currently have in our fleet seven Airbus 320-200 and two Boeing 767-300, furthermore SmartLynx Airlines has four additional Airbus 320, all leased to various airlines. Loftleidir Icelandic is currently the majority share holder of SmartLynx. SmartLynx is a subsidiary company in the Icelandair Group..

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