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| OverviewCountry: CanadaIndustry: Professional servicesCustomer ProfileMinacs Worldwide, Inc. is Canada’s largest provider of customized business process outsourcing (BPO) solutions for contact centers, marketing services and back office administration.Business SituationMinacs wanted to review its overall business strategy and goals, streamline business operations, and audit its software assets to ensure utmost efficiency and effectiveness. SolutionMinacs tapped longtime IT partner Buchanan Associates to complete a SAM consultation, and develop a plan to help manage its software assets and ensure license compliance. Benefits* Ensures Compliance
* Cost Savings
* Centralizing Regional IT sites
 |  |  | “Overall, SAM helps us run our business better. It provides us a greater understanding of how many and what types of licenses we need, and allows us to streamline our spending. It’s saved us almost $100,000 in licensing and software purchases already.” Michael Iseyemi, Director, Security and Privacy Officer, Minacs Worldwide Inc.  |
|  |  | Minacs Worldwide Inc., Canada’s largest provider of customized business process outsourcing (BPO) solutions, planned to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2006 partly by reviewing its overall business strategy and goals. This included an audit of its technology resources, with a view to centralize its regional IT departments. Working with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Buchanan Associates, Minacs deployed a Software Asset Management (SAM) program to identify the different types of software running across the organization, and develop a standard software purchasing process to ensure there is no licensing overlap. SAM has helped Minacs save $100,000 in software costs by enabling the company to take control of its software assets and manage them more efficiently. |
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Situation

Minacs Worldwide, Inc. began in 1981 as a four-person staffing agency run out of Elaine Minacs’ basement in Oshawa, Ontario. Today, the company is Canada’s largest provider of customized business process outsourcing (BPO) solutions for contact centers, marketing services, and back-office administration. With more than 5,000 employees operating from locations in Canada, the United States and Europe, Minacs serves clients in the automotive, financial services, telecom and technology, public sector and consumer products industries.

The company was celebrating its 25-year anniversary in 2006. This milestone presented Minacs with the perfect opportunity to review its overall business strategy and goals. In particular, Minacs wanted to streamline business operations to ensure utmost efficiency and effectiveness. Part of this process included an audit of the software it was using.

Without a standard for monitoring and managing its software assets, Minacs had no clear picture of what applications were being used across the organization. The company’s business processes were centralized by region instead of being managed from head office. Since each region had its own way of doing things, it was difficult to get a unified view to manage software resources efficiently.

According to Michael Iseyemi, the company’s Director, Security and Privacy Officer, Minacs needed a way to take inventory of its technology and manage everything from a central location.

“Essentially, we were looking to improve our bottom line,” says Iseyemi. “We wanted to make sure we knew where our software assets were, and how they were being used.”

Solution

While Minacs was in the process of planning its company-wide audit, it received information from Microsoft® about the Software Asset Management (SAM) program. SAM is a set of guidelines, procedures and tools to help organizations effectively manage their software assets. This includes matching software to licenses, reviewing policies and procedures, performing a software inventory audits and establishing an ongoing plan to keep track of licenses.

The timing could not have been better. With SAM, Minacs found exactly what it needed to catapult its business efficiency and software resource management initiatives forward. Ironically, Minacs’ longtime technology partner, Buchanan Associates, had recently achieved its SAM competency designation from Microsoft. Minacs was therefore able to tap Buchanan Associates to complete a SAM consultation.

Having a trusted technology partner both familiar with its business and knowledgeable about the software asset management process provided Minacs with the guidance and peace of mind it was looking for. The consultation involved three main steps to develop a SAM program that would meet Minacs’ needs.

First, Buchanan Associates met with Minacs to set objectives and discuss goals of the consultation. The discovery process involved two meetings, during which key Minacs personnel were taken through an in-depth questionnaire. The survey referenced IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practices, and additional recommendations based on Buchanan Associates’ own industry expertise. ITIL is a comprehensive set of best practices for IT service management, drawn from both the public and private sectors and used widely around the world.

Buchanan Associates then tailored an effective software management program using Minacs’ answers to the questionnaire.

Next, a detailed inventory of current software assets and licenses was taken. Once this was complete, the inventory and licensing reports were compared to help locate any missing licenses.

Finally, a detailed report was created to outline recommendations for Minacs. The report included best practices for the company, based on its situation and ITIL guidelines. Key recommendations included centralizing software acquisition, and creating a point of responsibility within the organization for SAM. As well, it was recommended that Minacs develop a license maintenance program to so it could keep track of software assets on an ongoing basis, as new applications were deployed.

Buchanan Associates also recommended that Minacs develop SAM skills, including licensing expertise, and negotiate software acquisition agreements with preferred partners to minimize costs and ensure control.

Benefits

By putting a centralized Software Asset Management system in place, Minacs now has up-to-date information to help it determine how to make the best use of its software. SAM also helps the company plan for future software investments.

“Through SAM, we were able to provide Minacs with a true understanding of its software asset picture. This helps them identify areas where they can save money, as well as providing the comfort of license compliance,” says Chuck Ma, Director, Consulting Services, Buchanan Associates. “We found that in some cases, they were actually over licensed – so they were able to cut back software costs immediately.”

Confidently compliant

Implementing a SAM process has helped Minacs ensure that proper licensing procedures are being followed. With SAM in place, discrepancies between existing software and purchased licenses can be addressed easily and quickly. This helps Minacs receive the full benefit from existing licenses, and take advantage of volume discounts.

“We feel much more confident with SAM in place, and have peace of mind knowing where we stand in terms of compliance,” says Iseyemi. “We can protect and manage our software more effectively, and plan better for future investments.”

Cost savings

The SAM program enables Minacs to really understand and get the most out of its existing technology investments. As a result, the company has been able to eliminate waste, overlap and redundancy, helping lower the costs associated with buying and maintaining its software library.

They have also been able to take advantage of volume discounts whenever possible. In fact, when Minacs first implemented SAM it had just won new business, and felt it needed to purchase a significant amount of new software as a result. By working within the SAM system, Minacs and Buchanan

Associates identified a licensing structure that allowed the company to benefit from Microsoft Volume Licensing. The volume discounts enabled Minacs to save 20 per cent of its planned technology spend.

“Overall, SAM helps us run our business better. It provides us a greater understanding of how many and what types of licenses we need, and allows us to streamline our spending,” says Iseyemi. “It’s saved us almost $100,000 in licensing and software purchases already.”

Centralized IT management

In the past, Minacs’ technology purchasing and tracking was done by each regional office. Since each office’s IT operations were run independently, there was no coordination across the company.

By deploying a SAM system, Minacs can now view all the software in use across the company, and centralize its IT management so all regional sites work together to solve common challenges. The company has also developed a new employee position focused on licensing. This person’s main role is to be the central point of responsibility for SAM within the organization, to help improve planning and make software acquisition a smooth, efficient process.

“Centralizing our IT resources was something we had wanted to do for a while,” says Iseyemi. “Implementing a SAM system provided us with a great opportunity to kick-start this initiative and develop company-wide procedures for obtaining new software, as well as making us aware of when updates are needed and available.”

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| Software & Services* Software Asset Management
 | Partners* Buchanan Associates Ltd.
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