



VitalSuite at Work

New England Financial gets visibility

The business problem facing New England Financial was the need to monitor, manage and improve the performance of business critical applications used by employees.

Founded in 1835, New England Financial, an affiliate of Metropolitan Life, is the oldest mutual life insurance company in the USA. But when it comes to business in the new millennium, the Boston-based insurance and investment services institution is strictly 21st century, using networked applications to deliver a complete line of insurance and investment products and services.

- ❖ Approximately 6,000 users, half at Boston headquarters and the rest distributed among more than 100 remote locations across the country, all linked via a nationwide network
- ❖ Employees rely heavily on networked applications to perform their jobs
- ❖ Critical to understand how these applications are performing in order to keep the business running smoothly

"For years, we had excellent tools that let us profile application performance in a mainframe environment. When we moved to a client/server environment, we needed to find some new software that gave us that same level of visibility."

John Corbett, Vice President of Network Technical Services

The challenge was to deploy a solution that provided visibility into how mission critical software, including both out of the box and custom applications, supported both users and the business processes they performed every day. New England Financial employees rely heavily on networked applications to perform their jobs. As a result, it was critical for the company to understand how these applications were performing for these users, particularly in the wake of a transition from a mainframe to a more traditional client/server environment

- ❖ "Visibility" includes insight into the application path, extending from the user's desktop, through the network, to the destination server
- ❖ Employees use a variety of e-mail, Internet, back-office and sales automation software, including solutions from PeopleSoft and, soon, Siebel Systems
- ❖ Agents also use customized order and data entry software, developed internally to automate the policy underwriting process and track calls to the company's toll-free call center

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The solution for New England Financial was investing in the VitalSuite family of enterprise performance management solutions to keep their business-critical applications running at peak performance. After reviewing a number of competitive products, New England Financial settled on the VitalSuite family of solutions to provide visibility into mission-critical application performance. "VitalSuite was – and is – head and shoulders above anything else," says Corbett.

"With VitalSuite, we are making better use of staff time. In the past, we spent a lot of time fighting fires. Now, VitalSuite allows us to keep our commitments to implement new technology to make the business run better. We are making tremendous progress, and morale has definitely improved."

John Corbett, Vice President of Network Technical Services

- ❖ VitalAgent software was installed on a representative number of desktops throughout New England Financial to monitor and collect application performance data such as response time, delay and round trip time on every TCP/IP transaction.
- ❖ VitalAgent data is forwarded to a central VitalAnalysis server, which correlates the incoming data to provide a detailed overview of how the applications are performing over time
- ❖ For the custom order entry software, Corbett used the VitalSuite Business Transaction Management System (BTMS) to define, characterize and monitor specific transactions such as policy generation, providing a new level of visibility into the very business operations that the applications support.

The true value of the VitalSuite solution was immediately apparent. Within months, New England Financial began to see returns on their VitalSuite investment. "While the other products we looked at simulated what was going on, VitalSuite provided actual performance statistics that told us exactly what was happening with our applications," said Corbett. "That information allows us to go in and make improvements that have tangible and immediate benefits for the business. With VitalSuite and the BTMS, we are able to profile and segment actual transactions so we know exactly where the problems are. No other vendor allowed us to do that."

- ❖ Using the BTMS, Corbett's team created "before" and "after" profiles of the order entry software, which had a history of buckling under the pressure of quarter-end activities
- ❖ A review of the BTMS and VitalAnalysis benchmark reports revealed a problem with the SQL database – information Corbett's team used to re-engineer the software
- ❖ In December 1999, despite the triple threat of quarter end, year end and Y2K, the order entry software performed flawlessly. "We had the best December sales performance in company history – and the application didn't break," says Corbett.



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