

Gevity pays it forward

HR clients benefit from infrastructure and operational efficiencies



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—Vito Melfi, VP, IT Operations, Gevity

HP customer case study: HP management software helps improve visibility and control across development, operations and support

Industry: Professional employer organization

Objective:

Offer better HR services for less through continual improvements in technology infrastructure and service management efficiencies

Approach:

Integrate and automate infrastructure and technology services management for end-to-end visibility and control across development, operations, and support

IT improvements:

- Improved visibility into projects and resource deployment
- More automated service request management, incident tracking, and change management
- Better reporting and analysis of user support needs and activities
- Fewer defects and improved ability to meet application launch timetables

Business outcomes:

- Ability to grow with optimal organizational efficiency
- Improved use of assets and resources
- Better able to set and meet operational priorities
- Increased confidence in compliance, governance policies



Gevity HR, Inc., a leading professional employer organization and human resources (HR) outsourcing services provider headquartered in Bradenton, Fla., developed an industry leadership position by offering a simple but compelling value proposition: to execute HR functions more capably and inexpensively than clients could if they kept the processes in-house.

To do this, Gevity must continually drive internal efficiencies. Harnessing business technology is, therefore, a critical strategy, and one which the company refined by first standardizing its infrastructure—and then by implementing management tools that help to optimize its technology services delivery and make the most of its resources.

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Business

Throughout this process, Gevity increasingly turned to HP as its strategic partner. Engaging a single partner extensively makes sense, says Vito Melfi, VP of IT Operations at Gevity, as long as the partner's portfolio and capabilities keep pace with and mesh with your own technology vision and needs. "As HP expands into new areas, Gevity capitalizes on that growth to better serve our clients," he says. "We've been continually impressed with HP's ability to anticipate technology trends and originate solutions that address those trends."

Leveraging excellence in services management as well as infrastructure

Most recently, Gevity has looked beyond infrastructure to also gain efficiencies through more effective technology services management.

For example, the firm now tracks its technology projects and activities using HP Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) Center software. It automates the management of service requests, incident tracking and change management using HP ServiceCenter software. And it reduces the risk and time-to-deploy of new solutions by standardizing and automating its requirements testing and defect management using HP Quality Center software.

An even more strategic partnership

The roots of Gevity's relationship with HP can be found in the company's back office organization; for many years it ran Oracle ERP, Oracle Financials, Oracle Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Oracle Human Resource Management System (HRMS)

and Oracle Payroll, which are all part of Oracle E-Business Suite, on HP 9000 Superdome servers along with HP StorageWorks XP Disk Arrays and HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Arrays.

The relationship between the two companies both broadened and deepened when Gevity also chose HP for its front office operations. Shared Colleague directories and Microsoft® Windows® Server applications, including e-mail and SQL databases, reside on a combination of dedicated and virtualized Wintel-based HP ProLiant servers. Internal and external HP Storage Solutions ensures up-to-the-minute business recovery and high availability. Field office locations depend on HP ProLiant file and print servers running Microsoft Windows Server Operating Systems.

Gevity employees are equipped with HP Compaq nc6400 Business Notebooks and HP 5000 Series Business Desktop PCs. In the field, the notebooks give staff the mobility they need to achieve high standards in customer service by visiting customers and working on-site.

Through its strategic partnership, Gevity has gained an Adaptive Infrastructure that meets the needs of its clients and growing business.

"Standardizing on HP across the organization delivered benefits from a governance perspective," Melfi says. "Our infrastructure is more consistent."

HP also serves as Gevity's disaster recovery services provider, hosting an off-site data center that serves

Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

Infrastructure and services management

Primary hardware

- HP 9000 Superdome servers
- HP StorageWorks XP Disk Arrays
- HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Arrays
- HP ProLiant DL580 and DL380 servers
- HP Compaq nc6400 Business Notebooks
- HP 5000 Series Business Desktop PCs

Primary software

- HP Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) Center software
- HP ServiceCenter software
- HP Quality Center software
- HP Network Node Manager (NNM) software
- HP LoadRunner software
- Oracle E-Business Suite 11i
- HP-UX 11i v1 and v2
- Red Hat Linux

HP Services

- HP software implementation services

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as a failover location should an event compromise Gevity’s internal systems. And Gevity leverages HP Financial Services to lease the majority of its equipment and capitalize selected IT projects. “HP provides very favorable terms,” says Melfi. “Their leasing model makes it very easy for us to address our financing needs.”

Finally, there is HP’s management software—tools that Melfi describes as “very strategic” for Gevity. “With HP’s expansion into technology management, our engagement gains a whole new dimension,” he says.

Managing services needs more efficiently

Tiffany Webb, Senior Project Manager, leads the effort to gain advantage through more efficient technology services management. Her team started by defining a vision of where the company wanted to be, she says. “We wanted to run IT as a business. And since we’re a services organization, we need to provide services that meet our customers’ needs while being efficient and low-cost.” To get there, the team identified a number of interim objectives, such as automating its management processes and improving its ability to share information across its organization.

“Finding an end-to-end solution was critically important,” Webb continues. “We needed a fully integrated product suite that would give us visibility across development, operations and support.”

Gevity was already using HP infrastructure management software. For instance, HP Operations software handles fault and availability management and HP LoadRunner software is used to test application performance before putting software into production. “We have peak periods, such as during Annual Benefits Enrollment (ABE) periods,” Webb

says. “We use LoadRunner software to simulate high levels of client activity to ensure our systems can meet the demand.”

Nevertheless, the team evaluated a number of different technology service management options to determine which tools would enable Gevity to best serve its clients and match its business needs. The vendor’s ability to help Gevity with implementation was also crucial.

In the end, they selected HP service management software. As Webb explains, “In addition to the technology itself, HP spent a lot of time with us, sharing their plans for where they are taking their product portfolio. HP’s leadership is an important part of the entire package for us.”

Understanding where resources are deployed

The company worked closely with HP software consultants to implement the new software. “This was a brand new technology for us, so we used HP implementation services. The HP engineers have a direct line to product management, so if questions came up they could help us make decisions that are in line with HP’s product roadmap,” says Webb. “They helped us meet our implementation timetable and assisted with training our internal operational support staff.”

Today, the company has completed the initial stages of its HP software implementation plan, including deploying HP ServiceCenter; HP Project and Portfolio Management Center software’s time management module; and HP Quality Center. This initial phase established a foundation for IT enterprise management. With these tools in place, Gevity will begin to baseline performance and service-delivery metrics as it focuses on service to its clients, operational efficiencies and productivity gains. The initial phase was completed within a four-month time frame—on time and on budget.

“The ‘glue’ that holds it together,” Webb explains, “is HP Project and Portfolio Management Center software.” Gevity’s first step was to install the product’s Time Management module; this application enables the company to track what projects its 80 technology employees are working on, along with associated data. “We now understand how our resources are deployed and where we’re spending time—and money,” Webb says. “It has given our management the tools to set priorities and more efficiently serve our clients.”

Gevity also uses the application to make sure the staff is working on approved projects. “If a project

isn't in the system, our people know they shouldn't be working on it," Webb says. "It provides a very effective check to keep us focused."

Managing change, reducing defects

In addition to HP PPM Center, Gevity also uses HP ServiceCenter software for service request management, incident tracking, and change management and uses HP Quality Center software for requirements testing and defect management.

"Before, we didn't have formal change management practices," Webb says. "Now we're able to categorize our help desk calls and understand what kinds of services our users need. We have better reporting and analysis capabilities and better visibility into our support organization activities."

Using HP Quality Center provides Gevity with a path toward automating its Quality Assurance (QA) processes. "We didn't have much structure before," Webb says. "We kept our business requirements in Word documents, and our test cases were tracked via spreadsheet. Now everything is in one place."

"Already, our defect management is significantly improved," Webb continues. "Whoever has ownership of a particular defect now has responsibility for tracking it."

Since Gevity typically updates its customer-facing applications about every six weeks, better, more efficient QA has a significant impact. "We have more confidence that we can deliver products to market," Webb says.

Ultimately, she adds, Gevity plans to also implement the HP PPM Portfolio Management, Project

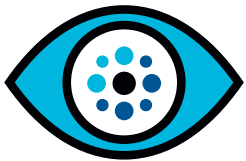
Management, Resource Management and Demand Management modules to integrate data flow from the HP ServiceCenter and HP Quality Center applications; HP Universal CMDB software will serve as the data hub. "We'll feed data from ServiceCenter to PPM, and then from PPM to Quality Center, Quality Center to PPM to enable demand and resource capacity planning and to give us a more holistic view of our services deployment," Webb explains. "The UCMDB will provide the foundation to allow us to discover and track any component of our infrastructure."

Managing change—and growth

The improved visibility will also improve Gevity's ability to comply with legal and regulatory guidelines. "Because of the nature of our business, we have to be responsive to issues like tax laws, which change frequently," Webb notes.

The new management tools also enable Gevity to make more informed decisions and respond more quickly to changing customer requirements, says Melfi. "HP software is very strategic to us. It gives us the capability to manage our IT assets and people and to communicate with senior management. We know where our IT investments are going and where we can gain efficiencies."

This, in turn, helps Gevity grow without adding staff at the same rate that would otherwise be required. "Gevity is a strong company offering a compelling value proposition to client businesses," Melfi says. "HP software lets us plan for the organizational growth that we are experiencing—and then support that growth with a more efficient model. This gives us a powerful competitive advantage in our market."



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