AL NABOODAH GROUP ENTERPRISES

Snow's strategic capabilities elevates IT to trusted business partner

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Al Naboodah Group Enterprises (ANGE) is one of UAE's oldest and most respected family conglomerates with a diverse portfolio of businesses. Employing over 16,000 people and over 40 nationalities, ANGE's core business focuses on three areas of construction: civil engineering, building and MEP, as well as representing a diverse portfolio of global brands in the transportation, travel, electrical, logistics, heavy equipment, agriculture and fit-out arenas.

CHALLENGE

Although ANGE is heavily diversified, IT is run centrally, on a group-level. Abhinav Mittal, ANGE's IT Governance and Planning Manager, is responsible for IT financial management, IT planning and IT governance across a challenging range of businesses and geographical locations. Mittal and the Group CIO, Mario Foster, realized they needed a solution which provides them with user level visibility into the hardware and software, to control the sprawling IT spend.

SNOW'S CONTRIBUTION

Snow is proving to be a very effective deterrent against audits. On learning that ANGE has implemented Snow License Manager, software vendors tend to move on to companies with less solid Software Asset Management processes. Snow has also helped to tighten up the request and procurement process, improve cyber security and pro-actively manage ANGE's critical business systems. Mittal and his team use Snow in their internal discussions with the Group CIO and the IT Steering Committee. Demand for budget cuts can be negotiated objectively with data from Snow. His good rapport with senior management across the group means IT is seen as a strategic player, not merely a manager of software assets. By sharing the software usage from Snow software, Mario Foster, Group CIO is able to drive strategic conversations during executive management meetings. Armed with intelligence from snow, Mario is able to help business leaders reduce their IT costs by proactively educating business users to stop renewal of unitized licenses.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Audit deterrent
- Strategic capabilities leading to buy-in from C-level management
- Effective blacklisting of applications
- Enhanced cyber security

SAM HERO

Abhinav Mittal, ANGE's IT Governance and Planning Manager said: "As a Software Asset Management solution, Snow helps Al Naboodah Group Enterprises maintain our license to operate, have better visibility, better productivity management of risks in the organization. It helps all of us."

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COMPANY BACKGROUND

Al Naboodah Group Enterprises (ANGE) is one of UAE's oldest and most respected family conglomerates with a diverse portfolio of businesses. ANGE is headquartered in Al Awir and employs more than 16,000 people and over 40 nationalities.

With as many as 100 construction sites active at any time, ANGE's core business focuses on three areas: civil engineering, building and MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing), as well as representing a diverse portfolio of global brands in the transportation, travel, electrical, logistics, heavy equipment, agriculture and fit-out arenas. ANGE is headquartered in the UAE, with operations in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and East Africa.

THE CHALLENGE

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IT planning and IT governance across an IT environment that straddles a wide range of businesses and geographical locations. Group CIO, Mario Foster with his IT team at ANGE knew they needed a powerful solution to control the IT assets. "We wanted a better visibility into both hardware and software for all users' computers that we have on our system, in head office and across our different locations. Without knowing what we have on users' machines, we are left in the dark." Mario explains.

Apart from a favorable mention in Gartner, what persuaded ANGE team to opt for Snow's SAM Platform, was the helpful customer service from Snow's General Manager in the Middle East David Walsh. Great software with "great graphics and the easier way of integrating license information" along with personalized commitment for success from Snow GM was key at successful implementation for ANGE.

In March 2016, ANGE bought Snow License Manager, Software Recognition Service, Snow Inventory and Snow's Virtualization Management Option for 2,200 devices, with an additional 800 licenses purchased later that year.

AUDIT? WHAT AUDIT?

It often happens that companies invest in Snow to improve audit-readiness only to find that once vendors get wind of this, they are much less inclined to proceed with an audit! And so it

proved with ANGE. Mittal said: "We tell the vendors upfront we are using Snow, and that we have very well-defined Software Asset Management processes and policies to back that up." It is an effective deterrent. "One vendor wanted to do an audit, but we showed them the Snow report, and it just turned back!"

STRATEGIZING WITH SNOW

Mittal is passionate about the strategic leverage of Snow. "For example, some time back, our Group CFO asked us to cut our budget. And because we had the data on which software is used by business users which software is centrally provisioned by IT, the cost of all that software and who was using it, we were able to have a very objective negotiation with our Group CFO about where IT could shrink its budget and deliver greater productivity."

SNOW CONTROL

Mittal runs a tight ship, working closely with the Group CIO, Mario Foster. The group has a set of well-defined policies about what standard software users are supposed to have on their PCs. The procedure for sourcing any software or hardware is also spelled out very clearly.

"When it comes to software, unless I review what it is – do we have anything duplicated? Is Snow reporting something alternate? – I don't sign it off. Everything has to be routed through IT gover-nance. All requests for exceptions are reviewed by the Group CIO and approved by IT Steering committee," he says.

SNOW VERSATILITY

One consideration early on in the sales process with Snow was: how can we get those remote devices to report in? Mittal comments: "The Snow technical team from the UK was very helpful in trying to figure out a solution to our problem."

In the end, Microsoft SCCM was deployed as a technology to push the Snow agent on to the remote devices. The fear that it would prove too large and cumbersome for a reporting site running on a low bandwidth proved groundless. This gave IT Infrastructure team at ANGE an idea about an effective way of deploying Snow.

"Now the Snow client is part of our standard Windows deployment image, which means that any time when a new system is formatted, or a new system is brought in the organ-isation, the Snow setup is a default, like anti-virus or any other mandatory software for the machine," he adds.

ALL SYSTEMS SNOW

ANGE's Group IT team has been able to leverage Snow on several group-wide projects. Mittal cites the following example: ANGE was implementing a product that needed .NET Frame-work 4.5. With visibility in Snow, the IT Infrastructure & Service Desk teams could clearly identify and target only those PCs that had an older version. When mid-project, the vendor changed its specification to 4.6, Snow could easily identify the

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systems that could be moved directly from 4.4 to 4.6, and which ones to upgrade from 4.5 to 4.6. "We would not have had that visibility and power to scale faster if we had not deployed Snow," Mittal says.

At ANGE, the service desk team is also using Snow data on which devices are running low on disk-space to proactively prevent this becoming a problem. "This helps us improve the performance of end user devices, improve our SLAs as well as that of workers' own productivity."

GLOBAL SNOW

ANGE's Group IT team has used Snow to retire or recycle unused licenses. They look at ROI for Snow software in a more strategic way: the avoidance of vendor audits and the ability of Snow to shape the group's long-term thinking.

Mittal and his team are active members of the Snow Globe, Snow's user community, and he is keen to be an advocate for sound Software Asset Management (and Snow) throughout the Middle East.

This is how he sums up his experience with Snow: "I think we made a wise choice. With the amount of information that we get from Snow, and from a personal point of view, how it has been able to help me have a good IT governance function, which is a remarkable achievement in the Middle East region, I think it was one of the most strategic IT investments we have made."

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