

Building a Nation Out of Islands

Unifying a Global Media Brand by Consolidating Commodity Technologies

“OMG” isn’t just a popular texting acronym for teenagers—it also stands for Omnicom Media Group, the media services division of Omnicom Group Inc. The Omnicom Group, one of the world’s largest advertising agency holding companies, built OMG from the ground up in 2002 as part of a strategy to establish a global brand around its many media “islands” all over the world.

Unifying more than 140 locations and 5,000 clients in 100 countries under a single enterprise management and technology infrastructure would scare some CIOs witless. But Kenneth Corriveau, CIO of OMG, has

By Ken Downie

relished the challenge. Having worked his way up the ranks, starting as an email administrator at Omnicom’s largest agency, DDB Worldwide, Corriveau understands that a good IT organization is never static.

“In a way it was fortunate, because we were starting from scratch,” says Corriveau, who at the time was CIO of one of the major entities being brought within the OMG umbrella. “We were able to create our own identity and figure out what worked. Combining various corporate cultures into one was not easy, but it allowed us to establish a single technology foundation, so today we have consolidated environments.”

“We don’t just roll out technology for technology’s sake,” Corriveau continues. “We partner with the business. We look for champions that will work with us. And we come up with solutions, and the ideas in technology solutions are not just from the technologists, but also from the business.”

“We had to shift our thinking from a local, island operations mentality to looking at a larger picture,” adds Dan Reynolds, director of shared technology and security for OMG. “Regardless of what country you’re in, there needs to be a seamless user experience across the board. Our goal was to roll out one set of policies at the top level to achieve



Kenneth Corriveau, CIO, Omnicom Media Group



Global Media Innovation at OMG

Founded: 2002
Headquarters: New York City
Revenue (2007): \$12.7 billion in FY2007
Worldwide presence: 140 locations and 5,000 clients in 100 countries
Full Service Media Networks: OMD, PHD, Prometheus
Specialty Media Companies: Full Circle Entertainment, Icon International, Outdoor Media Group, Ketchum Directory Advertising, and others
Web Site: www.omnicommediagroup.com

management efficiencies and economies of scale.”

By 2004, OMG had laid the groundwork to combine its IT operations into three regional data centers—and then the volume of the company’s data exploded.

Overcoming the data deluge

OMG’s data grew from two terabytes to 15 terabytes almost overnight, which threatened to overwhelm the organization’s backup solution. “We were going through a real growth spurt and went from about 30 servers to nearly 100 in a very short period of time,” remembers Corriveau. “We started getting into more data warehousing, data analysis, and overall larger files.”

OMG needed to ensure that backup jobs met allotted time windows and completed reliably. Corriveau decided to implement Veritas NetBackup, which enabled OMG to consolidate backup monitoring and services to the point where a single employee, only a few hours a week, is now able to handle backup tasks for all of

North America versus an aggregate of about 2.5 full-time employees with the prior solution.

“We saw the organization was quickly moving in a more data-centric direction, and we had to take a step back and figure out what technologies we’d be able to leverage going forward,” says Corriveau. “Consolidating commodity technologies is key. We’ll be able to replicate the model we’ve established in North America with NetBackup to our other regional data centers, so that one person is responsible for the entire backup for the region.”

This consolidated approach to backups will not only save OMG time, but also ensure that backups are being done properly. “Reliably backing up more data in less time has become even more critical as our environment has moved more toward a 24x7 organization,” says Corriveau.

Supporting a global document retention policy

Corriveau, with a major in marketing and minor in computer science from Assumption College, has a knack for understanding the business needs of a media organization, as well as the underlying technology. “My overall philosophy with technology is to make sure that we’re enabling the business,” he says. “It’s not just technology for technology’s sake.”

Like many organizations, Omnicom has recently established a global document retention policy for email and other electronic documents. To support this business need, Omnicom corporate recently selected

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Symantec Enterprise Vault to help ensure compliance for all its “network” companies, including OMG.

“Omnicom has a group that we call the Information Technology Planning Board, which includes the CIOs of all the networks,” says Frank Manzi, VP of internal control for OMG’s parent company, Omnicom Group Inc. “In a holding company structure like ours, a lot of the control is really at the local level. So it’s a little more difficult to impose broad, sweeping initiatives. With email and document retention, we’re not in an environment where we can say, ‘These are the systems you must use to implement the policy, just get it done.’”

Enterprise Vault Microsoft Exchange PST Migrator allows OMG to ingest user emails contained in PST files throughout the network into the Enterprise Vault archive repository. “This is important for us, because we have over 24 terabytes of PST files out there,” states Corriveau.

“We’re going to see a tremendous drop in disk storage utilization with Enterprise Vault,” adds Reynolds. “We’ll be able to reduce all the duplicates and minimize the data that we just don’t need to keep. And from a corporate compliance perspective, we will be able to manage document retention on a global basis.”

On “Broadway”

OMG is also using the Altiris Client Management Suite to streamline help desk workflow and asset tracking; this will come in handy as the company moves 700 employees into its new headquarters on Broadway in New York City.

“As a technologist, you need to be running as fast, if not faster than the organization is in terms of coming up with new ideas and solutions,” Corriveau sums up. “In order to do that, you need to understand a lot of different technologies. So it helps to come up through the ranks. To be successful, you need to continually re-evaluate your organization and be prepared for change. Just because you had one idea years ago doesn’t mean that’s the same direction you should be going in today.” ■

Ken Downie is a writer at the NAVAJO Company. His work has appeared in Business Finance, Internet World, and Business Credit magazines.

Advertising Symantec Solutions at OMG

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- > Symantec Enterprise Vault
- > Veritas NetBackup 6.5



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Confidence in a connected world.

