

Swisscom IT Services

Automated Storage Management with Veritas CommandCentral Storage



Swisscom IT Services (SCIS) uses Veritas CommandCentral™ Storage from Symantec for central, automated management of its storage infrastructure. As a service provider, SCIS needs to ensure transparency in its monthly customer billing process, since customers must be billed for all the services they use. CommandCentral Storage solves this problem by automatically reconciling the data with the asset accounting in the SAP system. This means that up-to-date data is now available on a daily basis to everyone on Swisscom's network who is authorized to access it, which is a great help when business decisions must be made.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Swisscom IT Services is one of Switzerland's leading providers of IT services. Its core business is the integration and operation of complex IT infrastructures, either fully or partially outsourced. Swisscom IT Services has an excellent track record in a number of sectors, especially telecommunications, finance, healthcare and public administration, and the media.

INDUSTRY

Technology

SOLUTION

Storage Management

“With CommandCentral Storage we get the ‘big picture’, and that’s of great importance to us for our day-to-day business activities. We always have the latest information on links, free disk space and the status of sub-systems without having to check the individual systems.”

Bruno Kocher

Head of Enterprise Storage Services
Swisscom IT Services, Berne

The Entire Storage Infrastructure at a Glance

Swisscom IT Services (SCIS) is a Swiss IT service provider specializing in the integration and operation of complex IT infrastructures, both fully and partially outsourced. Swisscom achieves automated management of its storage landscape using Veritas CommandCentral Storage from Symantec.

The company was facing a challenge in relation to have an overview of disk space information. As Bruno Kocher, head of enterprise storage services at Swisscom IT Services in Berne puts it; Swisscom was missing ‘the big picture’. There was no central control point for the storage infrastructure, and everything had to be managed manually. Yet as a service provider, Swisscom IT Services needs transparency in its monthly customer billing process, since customers must be billed for all the services they use. “The idea was to automate this process and make it more professional,” explains Donat Kaeser, storage product manager at Swisscom IT Services.

After a number of potentially suitable products had been evaluated Swisscom shortlisted three providers. However, as Bruno Kocher explains, only the Symantec tool met all their requirements. It was not just its functionality that was attractive: CommandCentral Storage was also already well established on the market. “We’ve had references for this tool from some good sources,” says Bruno Kocher, “and that gave us added confidence in our decision.”

When evaluating possible products, Swisscom had to bear in mind that, for strategic reasons, it could not install software agents on customers’ systems. And for security purposes, it needed to access customers’ networks from a central server.

Swisscom IT Services enjoys 20% greater efficiency in its day-to-day operations, thanks to Veritas CommandCentral Storage from Symantec.

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Up-to-Date Data is Now at His Fingertips

Implementing Version 5.0 together with its partner Symantec proved straightforward for Swisscom. What Bruno Kocher particularly likes about this version is that he can now program his own SQL statements as well as automate a whole host of processes. One process, called ‘charge back’, is used to record and bill for the services used by customers. The up-to-date data is now available on a daily basis to everyone on Swisscom’s network who is authorized to access it. Additionally, Bruno Kocher was able to automate reconciliation with the asset accounting on the SAP system.

Central Management Platform

Bruno Kocher sees CommandCentral Storage as the central platform from which to manage the system landscape —specifically to provide improved visibility, monitoring, and reporting. It allows him to deliver to his customers with a daily status report, which is very important for their business decisions. Whoever is responsible for storage can manage the entire storage landscape from the platform. This provisioning is currently performed using the particular manufacturer’s own, but it is planned in the near future to manage this with CommandCentral Storage as well.

“With CommandCentral Storage we get the ‘big picture’, and that’s of great importance to us for our day-to-day business activities,” explains Bruno Kocher. “We always have the latest information on links, free disk space, and the status of sub-systems without having to check the individual systems.” And by using the CommandCentral Enterprise Reporter module, Kocher is able to compile various items of management information, such as the report on monthly growth in storage space. CommandCentral Storage also enables him to monitor the SAN. Problems with ports and switches are reported by text or email on the basis of predefined value limits, so that fault clearance measures can be initiated right away.

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Automatically bill customers for storage resources used
- Reconcile with SAP system (asset accounting)
- Visibility into free disk space, available storage attached network (SAN) resources, and sub-systems status
- Highlight problems with ports and switches

Technology challenges

- Reliance on systems from different manufacturers
- Not possible to install software agents via IP

Solution

Automated storage management solution centralizes visibility and control

Symantec products

- Veritas CommandCentral™ Storage 5.0
- Veritas CommandCentral™ Enterprise Reporter 5.0

Technology environment

- Server: Sun® Fire V890
- Desktops: HP® / Dell®
- Operating system (client) Microsoft® Windows® XP
- Applications: Miscellaneous

“The use of CommandCentral Storage means we achieve lower total cost of ownership in the storage area, which support us to strengthen our competitiveness.”

Donat Kaeser

Product Manager Storage
Swisscom IT Services,

BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

Efficiency

- Reduced complexity
- Led to approximately 20% greater efficiency in day-to-day operation
- Improved storage area network total cost of ownership

Security

- Required no software agents

Time to deployment

- Complete integration and productivity within three months with version 5.0

Significantly greater efficiency in day-to-day operation

In addition to the overview of the system landscape, reduced complexity, and improved storage management, Bruno Kocher also cites an increase in efficiency in day-to-day operations that he estimates to be somewhere around 20 percent. This increase is primarily due to the automatic availability of important system information, which speeds up processes. “We used to have to enter the relevant data manually in Excel tables,” he recalls, “but of course we don’t need to do that anymore.”

In the next step, Bruno will improve backup monitoring and reporting with Veritas™ Backup Reporter™ from Symantec: after which everything will be automated. For documenting provisioning, he has already purchased a test license for the CommandCentral Storage Change Manager module. Since Swisscom IT Services has certification procedures conducted regularly, accurately documented provisioning is very important. With CommandCentral Storage, he will be able to push ahead with automation because, as he says: “There are still a few items outstanding.”

It is clear that Bruno Kocher rates CommandCentral Storage very highly. “Because our different systems, we’ve got to rely on an independent tool. With CommandCentral Storage, we have a much clearer view of storage—and that’s strategically important to us.” His colleague Donat Kaeser, adds: “The use of CommandCentral Storage means we achieve better total cost of ownership in the storage area. And that’s very important in helping us strengthen our competitiveness.”