

# Network

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**CASE STUDY**  
THUMBAY  
GROUP'S  
OVERHAUL  
//32

**FEATURE**

*How to secure  
the hospital  
network*

//38

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mobile  
devices.

//18 **COLUMN**  
Gartner's  
trends for 2015

//06 **UPDATE**  
Juniper  
Networks' newly  
appointed CEO

**HEALTHCARE  
SPECIAL**

# IN GOOD HEALTH

**MEDNET MAINTAINS HEALTHY OPERATIONS BY  
UPGRADING ITS SUPPORT PROCESSES**

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26

“In a fast-growing company, we really have to service our clients in different departments.”

**Einstein Johnson Rozario,**  
**CIO, MedNet UAE**

**26//Case study> In good health**

With its ad-hoc approach to IT support beginning to show weaknesses, MedNet needed a solution that would not only provide IT with accountability for its actions, but also be based on ITIL standards. The answer was ManageEngine's ServiceDesk Plus Enterprise Edition.

**32//Case study> Linked in**

As it began to eye large-scale expansion with the opening of new hospitals, Thumbay Group wanted to create a new, centralised network for all of its branches. It called on Huawei to link up various hospitals across the UAE, and provide a new backbone.

**38//Security> Securing the hospital network**

As a wave of digitalisation sweeps the healthcare industry, concerns over data privacy among patients have reached a tipping point. It is now on the region's healthcare providers to ensure their networks are highly secure.

— Bocario: The clock starts ticking on any IT issues that you fail to fix.

Case study

# In good health

In a bid to improve the quality of its IT support services, and gain ISO certification, MedNet implements ManageEngine's ServiceDesk Plus Enterprise Edition.

**M**edNet is an international provider of managed healthcare services. Owned by Munich Health, the health segment of the world's largest re-insurer, Munich Re, the company's Middle East operations span the GCC countries, Jordan, Kurdistan, Greece and Cyprus. MedNet's core business is with health insurance providers, for which it offers end-to-end managed healthcare solutions. For example, if an individual took out a health insurance policy with one of MedNet's customers, MedNet would provide all of the back-office functions, from payment decisions to medical consultations.

MedNet says that its services go far beyond the provision of administrative services. The company employs its own medically trained professionals to advise doctors on a case-by-case basis, as well as a dedicated claims team, which adjudicates on claims paid out by its customers. Other services it offers include product design, pricing support, medical risk evaluation, medical management, healthcare provider management, training and consulting services.

Such an organisation needs a robust IT infra-

structure, not only from a business continuity standpoint, but from a moral one, too. The business need for robust IT is obvious – if claims go wrong as a result of an IT error, its insurance provider customers could end up paying too much or too little out. Under the former scenario, the insurance provider will lose faith in Mednet's administrative capabilities; under the latter, the insurance provider's customers will lose faith and look elsewhere for their health insurance. Meanwhile, from a moral standpoint, MedNet has an obligation to do things properly because, in the business of healthcare, any error has the potential to cause loss of life. The stakes are extremely high indeed.

As a result, MedNet's IT infrastructure is highly tailored to its business needs. The company owns around 52 servers, some of which are virtualised, running various different operating systems. The company runs Windows, a number of flavours of Linux, and relies heavily on open-source technologies. It has developed a critical e-claims application system, which was done on PHP and a big data database on Mongo DB. It also has its own document management system, which

“ We just deployed a server and some necessary processes, and had a couple of rounds of interactions with the team, stating that this is how we're going to put it in.”

## MEDNET CASE STUDY SUMMARY

### Objective

With its ad-hoc approach to providing IT support beginning to show weaknesses, MedNet needed a solution that would not only provide IT with accountability for its actions, but also allow the company to pursue its goals of achieving ISO 20,000 certification.

### Solution

Having dismissed the idea of an open-source solution, MedNet opted for ManageEngine's ServiceDesk Plus Enterprise Edition offering. The IT help desk software not only puts ITIL-based workflows in place for delivering IT support, but also includes asset and IT project management capabilities.

### Results

MedNet now delivers IT support to end users based on ITIL best practices, which should stand it in good stead for when it applies for ISO 20,000 certification next year. On top of this, the quality of IT support has much improved, as has the company's ability to track its IT assets.



↑ MedNet has around 52 servers running various operating systems, including Windows and different flavours of Linux.

was developed in-house on MySQL from scratch.

Unfortunately, one area where MedNet's IT infrastructure was lacking was in its basic support services. Done completely ad hoc, support to end users was provided as and when they requested it via phone, e-mail or simply grabbing a member of the IT staff as they walked through the office. While this system hadn't caused any major hiccups, nothing that IT was doing was being documented, and as a result, if larger issues arose, there would be no accountability.

#### **BUSINESS CHALLENGE**

Such a system would hardly stand MedNet in good stead for one of its largest ambi-

tions – to gain ISO 20,000 certification. The idea, according to Einstein Johnson Rozario, CIO at MedNet UAE, is to put a seal of approval on MedNet's IT services, giving people more confidence in dealing with the company. However the ITIL best practices that the company would have to adopt to gain certification are a far cry from its previous way of doing things.

"We are a fast-growing company, we are really fast growing. And in a fast-growing company, we really have to service our clients in different departments. All of these issues were not tracked initially. It could relate to one health claim, imagine. An issue is reported, IT does not act on it, and at

that point in time, it might not have much of an effect. But the clock starts ticking, and that really has an effect on the service. We might end up forgetting it, and if we forget it, we might end up costing the company, or costing our reputation," Rozario explains.

"We didn't have a system. They used to call IT, and we'd go fix something. We'd just be walking around and someone would just say that they have a problem. Ultimately, we had to track the incidents, and all the processes that we wanted to put in. That was the starting point. We had to have an incident management system put into our processes."

MedNet began by looking into suitable open-

#### **THE CLIENT**

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source solutions, given its propensity for that way of doing things. However, according to Rozario, the company quickly decided against the open-source option. He reasoned that, by the time that MedNet had built out the solution, customising it to the company's needs, too many man-hours would have been spent to make it a worthwhile endeavour. What's more, the solution might not have been perfect in the end, anyway — this was something that MedNet couldn't risk, given its desire to get certified.

And so MedNet began scouring the market for a proprietary solution. According to Rozario, the solution had to be cost-effective, as well as based on ITIL best practices.

"We needed to put ITIL processes in place, leading to ISO certification, and we are really aiming for that. We are looking towards global certification so that we can put a standard on our IT operations. So we went to the first source of everything, the internet! We chose some cost-effective ones, and then we found one that was ITIL-based, from ManageEngine," he says.

#### THE SOLUTION

Having been impressed by the capabilities of ManageEngine's ServiceDesk Plus solution, MedNet contacted the vendor directly. Having assessed the company's requirements, the vendor recommended that MedNet implement the solution with Dubai-based Ellitser Tech-



↑ Rozario: The solution was really lightweight — we just deployed a server.

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**Einstein Johnson Rozario,**  
CIO at MedNet UAE

nologies, which not only knows the solution inside out, but also offers consulting services on achieving ISO 20,000 certification.

The help desk software is available in three flavours — the Standard Edition (which is downloadable for free), the Professional Edition, and the Enterprise Edition. The Professional edition provides the help desk software, which can be used to put processes in place for delivering IT support, as well as an asset management system. The Enterprise edition offers the asset management system, too, as well as ITIL-based processes, and

an IT project management system. The latter is what MedNet opted for.

The main driver for the implementation was that it would add a process to MedNet's delivery of IT support. As a result, instead of calling up IT on the fly, end-users would have to log a complaint through a web-based system. This would then be delivered to IT, and, though the software, IT would be able to view and prioritise pending IT support jobs. And the best thing about the Enterprise edition, from MedNet's perspective, was that the processes the software puts in place are based on ITIL standards.

"Whatever IT does, even if it's changing a PC from here to there, it has to be accounted for. Okay, you've changed a PC, but when, where, how, what did you do? Did you come in on a weekend, or did you do it at night? Those activities had to be really tracked, to show that IT was working," Rozario explains.

According to Rozario, the solution itself was relatively lightweight, meaning that it was not difficult to implement from a technological point of view. Indeed, it was so easy to implement that MedNet's UAE office also delivers the solution to the company's office in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Jordan, which consume the service through what is effectively a private cloud.

The challenge, however, came when putting the solution to good use — both IT and non-IT staff had to be

trained in the new processes when it came to IT support.

“With Ellitser’s help, we really did not notice that anything was happening. It was really lightweight. We just deployed a server and some necessary processes, and had a couple of rounds of interactions with the team, stating that this is how we’re going to put it in. They came, integrated it into our Active Directory, and created the different sites. It was fairly easy for them,” he says.

“Changing the way people thought about it, though, was tough. The non-IT users wouldn’t want to go to the site, so we’d made an e-mail option for them as well. But for certain users, what we did was say that, unless they logged in, we would not come and resolve the issue.”

#### BUSINESS BENEFIT

Rozario says that the main business benefit, from his point of view, is that IT is now accountable for its actions. This works both ways, he explains, so if a support job is not completed, the issue gets escalated to him and he can come down on his team and make sure the task is fulfilled. On the other side of the coin, if an end user tries to blame IT for a problem that was not reported, IT has the documentation to show that it is in the clear.

However, there are other, more subtle benefits to ServiceDesk Plus that Rozario has found. For one thing, he greatly appreciates the asset management



↑ According to Rozario, the solution has helped MedNet put ITIL-based processes in place, giving IT more credibility.

system included in the product. Previously, MedNet’s asset management was done on an Excel spreadsheet – hardly the best way of working, Rozario admits – and the same goes for the company’s management of software licences.

“That also used to be in an Excel sheet, and we’d look at what we had every month. Now I don’t have to think about it. I can just put the details on ServiceDesk and it’ll automatically shoot an email when something is due for renewal,” Rozario explains.

Of course, the biggest benefit going forward is that

“This has all the tools to really implement the ITIL parameters. It should not be that tough once you implement the tool and once you use it effectively.”

the solution stands MedNet is much better stead for its ambitions to achieve ISO 20,000 certification. Because the workflows provided by the solution are based on ITIL best practices, the processes are in place for MedNet to begin working to these standards. The company hopes to have gained the certification around the middle of next year.

“We’re going to really make use of this because this tool will really help me out to raise the standards of IT, in the view that we’re trying to attain global standards. This has all the tools to really implement the ITIL parameters. It should not be that tough once you implement the tool and once you use it effectively,” Rozario says.