How to manage your infrastructure more efficiently

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Jenn:
Welcome to this IBM podcast series focused on how to optimize your technology infrastructure. I am Jenn Knecht from IBM. Through this series we will cover topics that will help you lower IT complexity and improve operating efficiency and offer tips and advice on using technology and services to help you and your company succeed. Today I am joined by Jeanine Cotter to talk about ways to simplify and save on managing IT infrastructure while increasing availability.

Jeanine we are hearing economic slowdown is intensifying the challenges IT leaders and CIOs are facing. They are addressing growing demand from their constituents, while trying to manage pressures to decrease costs and complexity in their infrastructure. Can you tell us a bit about how IBM is helping to help ease the pain of your clients?

Jeanine:
Sure Jen, I would be happy to. You know, IBM is doing this in a variety of ways, but one of the ways that we are focused on within GTS is to help clients better manage their IT infrastructure while reducing operational costs and we are doing this through a variety of services and one of the services we recently introduced is called Remote Managed Infrastructure Services or RMIS for short. This is a service that leverages global delivery and automation to reduce costs while improving service quality. RMIS includes monitoring and management of servers, storage, network, and middleware and this remote monitoring and management helps clients improve their operational efficiency while keeping it flexible and modular. It also helps them achieve technical compliance by leveraging our expertise and support -- which we are great at through the myriad SO outsourcing arrangements that we have as well as the myriad ITS engagements that we’ve done.

It also it helps minimize IT related risk with proactive scanning and health checks to ensure security compliance and what we are seeing is that customer satisfaction actually goes up because to the client inside our client environment they are seeing better performance and better secure systems. Then of course we are helping our clients to control and reduce costs through the automation and the global delivery which is something that most clients do ask us for when we engage with them.

Lastly this is providing consistent and uninterrupted services by keeping a clients’ core systems running in a steady state to improve availability and access to information. So as we talk to CIOs today, we know that they are facing challenges of all sorts but mainly they need to increase
the efficiency of their IT operations while ensuring that those IT systems continue to be flexible to respond quickly to whatever is changing in their business environment.

There is also growing challenge around obtaining and retaining certain IT skills. So their ability to allow us to do this work for them helps relieve that type of pressure as well. All of these pressures associated with the current economic slowdown that we are saying have really propelled CIOs to look for both new and creative solutions like remote managed infrastructure services to fill specific needs that they have.

**Jenn:**
Many of us are familiar with traditional outsourcing. It sounds that this is a bit different. Is that correct?

**Jeanine:**
That’s a great question and we tackle that in many client situations and with many of our own internal teams. Yes, RMIS is very different than traditional outsourcing. Think of it as virtual staff augmentation which we enable through global resources, automation, standardization and best practices. This helps clients get more out of their existing infrastructure investments through enhanced monitoring and management while they are able to lower costs and it does not require a major transformation of their IT environment. Clients today, particularly midsize clients are demanding much more flexible choices to meet their IT management needs. RMIS provides that through outtasking rather than full outsourcing for clients who need specific help to supplement their in-house IT capabilities while keeping assets on their site and maintaining control of their infrastructure architecture decisions.

In addition some CIOs said they are reluctant to embrace offshore solutions. They want the security and peace of mind that comes with dealing with a local contact that speaks the same language and can be on site quickly if a real problem arises. Our RMIS service is designed to monitor and manage our clients existing IT infrastructure without the need to move assets off the client site or fully transform their current environment. RMIS employs a hybrid delivery and support approach that maintains a local presence with the client but heavily leverages global resources for both cost advantages and a center of competency. We believe this combination provides clients with much more value; the benefit of contracting with a trusted and experienced partner to provide what amounts to virtual staff augmentation, as I said before at affordable prices and minimal risk. This virtual staff augmentation frees up their precious IT staff and skills to go focus on some of the things that CIOs tell us that they really don’t have time to focus on like transformational projects that help them better align IT with the business.

To summarize, RMIS is very good option for companies interested in gaining our IT expertise but who may not yet ready, or ever ready, for full outsourcing agreements.
Jenn: Understanding. Based on your client experiences, can you give us a sense for which clients would benefit most from this kind of approach?

Jeanine: Sure, the solution is targeted to address the needs of midsize to large size companies that are managing complicated or fast-growing IT environments with limited IT staff. That’s kind of it in a nutshell. A little more specifically, any client that is seeing their operational budget grow 10 plus percent a year or being squeezed on budget available for new projects – which we hear quite frequently across the spectrum of company sizes. If they are having availability issues affecting access to business-critical applications. If they have a need to free up IT staff and skills as we mentioned before. If they have the need for staffing 24/7 to support more of a global operation, but either don’t have the management processes or the staff to do that. If they’re having challenges ensuring the security of their systems. If they’re looking for more flexibility in adjusting their IT staffing to meet business changes. Lastly, if they are experiencing challenges in effectively monitoring and/or managing their infrastructure. Those are all great questions to ask or scenarios to poke at to see if RMIS would be the right solution.

Jenn: Where can we tell our listeners to go and find more about these services?

Jeanine: Sure, right on our website www.IBM.com/services/servers. You can look for the link for remote managed infrastructure services on the left-hand side which you will see server managed services.

Jenn: Perfect. This concludes our podcast.

Jeanine thank you very much for your time. Listeners stay tuned for the next podcast on optimizing technology infrastructure.