



Voice of the Customer Report

Customer
COX

Vendor

 Verdiem.

Product
SURVEYOR

August 2009



The INI Group Voice of the Customer Reports

IT professionals find real value in the experiences of other customers in order to help inform their buying decisions. The Voice of the Customer (VoC) program is designed to provide insightful information for IT professionals to understand different products and services. The INI Group is a consulting firm with expertise in data storage, disaster recovery, data management, security and virtualization and we work closely with our customers to provide the VoC service.

Background

The INI Group interviewed Peter West, VP of Information Technology. This is how Peter describes his role:

“I’m VP of Information Technology and operational development. I’ve been with the company ten, almost eleven years. My overall responsibilities have to do with the internal IT network that supports our local business as well as the process strategy and business excellence sides of the organization. IT specific responsibilities, the internal network - so it’s the PC’s, the internal network that drives our business, the phones, the internal servers, things like that.”

The following is an overview of Cox Communication’s IT environment:

- Third largest cable, broadband and telephone service provider
- Six million customers
- Twenty-two thousand employees
- Sixteen thousand desktop pc’s

INI Group: Why did you decide to implement the Verdiem Surveyor?

Peter West: I sit on the advisory board of Cox Conserves which is a group that is tasked with helping Cox Enterprises reduce its company-wide carbon footprint by about twenty percent. Our efforts are expected to save around One hundred seventy-two thousand tons of green house gases a year and as part of that initiative, we were looking at ways to reduce PC power consumption beyond the capabilities of a native power management systems of PC's. Thus our search led us to Verdiem.

INI Group: Can you share with us the process you went through to decide on implementing the Verdiem Surveyor?

Peter West: We went through a rather rigorous testing process with Verdiem and two other PC power management solutions where we rated them on everything from ease of installation to actual power saved to level of support we received when we did encounter issues and even go in as far as to the ultimate configurability of the solution. The bottom line is that Verdiem is the best fit for our organization.

INI Group: Can you expand on why Verdiem was the best fit for your company?

Peter West: What led us to Verdiem as the solution for us, as the best fit was, when we did the side by side comparison of the three solutions that we narrowed it down to, there were a few things that were really important to us. First of all, structurally, we're set up with fourteen functioning units within Cox so there needed to be a way that we could deploy it quickly and easily to all of those systems but then allow each system to configure it as necessary for the settings in their system. Verdiem allowed us to do those things in a way that the other solutions didn't. Additionally, because of the way that we're set up and the structure of the fourteen independent systems, the deployment and the stability of the product was really, really important. What we found was that, of the three solutions that we tested, Verdiem was by far the most stable and the most consistent in its ability to run on a constant basis without having issues on a regular basis.

INI Group: Can you tell us how the Verdiem Surveyor has improved on the overall economic effectiveness within your IT operations?

Peter West: The first and most obvious benefit to us was that we immediately saw a forty percent PC power usage decrease on all the managed PC's. That, in and of itself, is fairly compelling. Additionally what we found was in many of the markets that we deployed this, there were either tax incentives or incentives being offered by local power companies to implement solutions like Verdiem. Another benefit that was unexpected for us was that while we're able to aggressively manage the usage of power by these PC's, we're also able to better manage our installation of patches and fixes on the PC's in off hours than we had been able to before. And what I mean by that is that, in the past if people were to turn their PC's physically off, you would have to send somebody around to physically turn them back on in order to put on emergency patches and things like that but with Verdiem that's all done remotely so we're able to power down and power up as needed, put on the patch and then power them down again. Once again, it was an unexpected benefit but one that we are finding really valuable.

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INI Group: Can you give us examples of how the Verdiem Surveyor provided real value to your company other than an economic effectiveness?

Peter West: One of the benefits beyond the cost savings and the impact on our carbon foot print is the ability of our IT folks to remotely turn computers on and off in order to put on patches. That's of a huge value that saves a lot on time for people having to walk around the building turning things on or off. Additionally and where this originally started was, it is going to allow us to make a major impact on our carbon foot print which is the charter of Cox Conserves. It also sends a message to our employees that we do take this very seriously, the Cox Conserves initiative and it allows us to educate them on what we're doing at work but also how they can similar things at home in order to save on pc power utilization.

INI Group: Can you give us any insights on the Verdiem Surveyor that would be useful for other IT professionals considering this solution?

Peter West: For us it was the best solution that we saw in several categories. First of all from an implementation perspective, the installation was the easiest of the solutions that we tested. It was the most reliable. When we did run across technical issues because, we are, as I said, in fourteen separate markets, when we found that there were issues with any of the implementations, the solutions were very simple and very quick to implement where some of the other solutions were quite complicated and in some respects, more expensive. From an internal process perspective, I think this is one of the best things about Verdiem is that we're able to send this out to fourteen systems who set up the settings that they feel best fits the needs of their system but we're able to monitor from one location so that we can see market by market and across system how much we're saving, where we're saving, where our opportunities are and that visibility is of utmost value to us.

INI Group: Both PCs and the data center are areas for IT to implement power management. Why was PC power management a priority for you?

Peter West: For two reasons, the first was sheer volume. With the number of employees and the number of PC's that we had in the organization, it made sense to us to go for where there was the most opportunity. The second has to do with the simplicity or complexity of the solution. From a PC power management, the solution is very simple. Because we know when, for example, people who work in an office environment, when they're likely to be most active. Similarly, in our call centers, when they're likely to be most active. The flip side of that is when you have a data center with servers, knowing when each individual server is most likely to be utilized/not utilized is slightly more complex so for us the first logical step was the ease and sheer number which led us to focus on the PC's.

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INI Group: What are the next steps using the Verdiem Surveyor?

Peter West: For us, right now, it's maximizing the power management settings per market. We've looked at making this fun and interesting for our folks like possibly by creating a competition to see who can save the most. Because our markets are run fairly independently, creating an incentive is much more effective than creating an environment where we're saying you must use these settings. What we're finding is that markets are really excited to tweak on a regular basis to try to get the most they can out of this. So for us, communicating the successes and using the dashboard that shows market by market how people are saving and what their settings are is going to be the most effective way for us to really ramp up our effectiveness with this.

INI Group: Would you recommend the Verdiem Surveyor to other IT professionals and can you tell us why?

Peter West: I would recommend it for several reasons. The ease of installation, the immediate savings. Once again we saw an immediate drop of forty percent on power usage on those PC's that were managed and that leads to a really fast pay back. One of the best things for us though I think is that while you have this really robust, really effective solution, it's invisible. People don't know it's there and unless we told them that we installed something new as part of the Cox Conserves initiative, our employees wouldn't have known the difference and that is the biggest benefit to us because we're getting all the payoff but there's no downside from a productivity perspective.

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THE INI GROUP

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