

## IBM Tivoli Business Systems Manager helps the Principal Financial Group manage service levels



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### Overview

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■ **Challenge**

*Understand how IT events affect business-critical processes*

*Improve availability of customer-facing services*

*Decrease problem-resolution time*

■ **Solution**

*IBM® Tivoli® Business Systems Manager, IBM Tivoli Enterprise Console®, IBM Tivoli NetView®, IBM Tivoli Monitoring*

■ **Results**

*Improve communication between IT and business units*

*Help IT administrators understand how their components map to business-critical processes*

*Help staff identify potential IT projects that have meaningful impact on business operations by analyzing event history from a business perspective*

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Headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, The Principal Financial Group serves more than 13 million customers worldwide from offices in Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America and the United States.

**Challenge: create integrated business views**

For Dave Boggess, senior IT systems analyst and enterprise systems management architect with The Principal, understanding how IT outages affect the company’s most critical business processes is the latest phase in moving from enterprise systems management to business impact management.

While the company has used infrastructure management tools for years, there was a missing link during service-level agreement (SLA) meetings with company business unit executives.

“It was as if we were speaking a different language,” recalls Boggess. “We could show that we were meeting SLA requirements for each of the various IT components, however, the business unit managers would tell us what mattered was the availability of their business processes.”

Such conversations inspired The Principal to search for a method to help organize, analyze and report on how IT outages affected business segments. Knowing whether a router or a server was down was no longer enough. The goal was to understand which business processes were affected. Could the company’s call center staff still access customer service information? Could employer groups complete online transactions through the company’s Web site? Could individual investors access account information?

“Everybody was doing a great job at the component level,” says Boggess.

“But, if we were to talk about availability from the business perspective, we needed to correlate that information into high-level business views.”

**Solution: IBM Tivoli Business Systems Manager**

The Principal selected Tivoli Business Systems Manager to correlate event information into concise business views. Tivoli Business Systems Manager integrates event information for The Principal from Tivoli Enterprise Console, Tivoli Monitoring, Tivoli NetView, Tivoli NetView for z/OS and non-IBM products, such as Freshwater Software SiteScope and HP Insight Manager. Tivoli Business Systems Manager also pulls information from the company’s existing installations of IBM CICS®, IBM DB2® and IBM WebSphere® Application Server.

“Tivoli Business Systems Manager helps us integrate a combination of Tivoli and other tools to better understand how various IT events affect the availability of critical business processes,” explains Boggess.

According to Boggess, the company is focusing first on vital customer-facing applications. This includes its

external customer call center system, which enables customer service representatives to access account information, and its retirement service center applications, which provide individual and institutional clients with customized online account service capabilities.

“We want to put our best foot forward and help give customers access to the services they need,” says Boggess.

Tivoli Business Systems Manager complemented the company’s use of Tivoli NetView, Tivoli Enterprise Console and Tivoli Monitoring. These Tivoli Performance & Availability management solutions were adopted in 1999 to replace a number of point solutions. Most of the company’s network devices, which are in the thousands, are monitored by Tivoli NetView. Tivoli NetView provides the event filtering and simple network management protocol (SNMP) data collection that are integral in maintaining network stability. Tivoli Monitoring helps server administrators monitor the company’s more than 600 servers running a variety of platforms: Microsoft® Windows NT®, Microsoft Windows® 2000, Novell NetWare, IBM AIX® and

Sun™ Solaris™. The company uses Tivoli NetView for z/OS for mainframe network monitoring and to forward events from the mainframe environment to Tivoli Enterprise Console.

Using Tivoli Enterprise Console, The Principal's operational command center can monitor alerts from Tivoli and non-Tivoli products to gain visibility to most IT resources. This interoperability is essential for The Principal.

"We went through a rigorous study [to choose these solutions]," explains Boggess. "We felt that Tivoli software could provide us with a framework that would help us monitor our environment and analyze data in an integrated fashion."

Since implementation, Tivoli Enterprise Console, Tivoli Monitoring and Tivoli NetView have helped improve event correlation and response time, which in turn helps improve the stability and reliability of the IT infrastructure. Now alerts use consistent corporate escalation procedures, trouble tickets are opened automatically, and events are archived for analysis.

Boggess highlights that some of the previously installed monitoring tools only could identify problems during "system sweeps," causing, on occasion, a lag-time between when an outage occurred and when administrators were alerted. Because Tivoli software reports an event as it happens, IT administrators at The Principal are learning about problems much earlier, which gives them improved visibility of their environment.

#### **Results: meeting business unit expectations**

Boggess expects that the business views provided by Tivoli Business Systems Manager will be valuable in helping IT meet the expectations of business unit managers and improve availability of business-critical processes.

Already, executives are happy with what they are seeing because the software provides business unit managers with a summarized view of the current operational status of their business process and the ability to view historical events that affect it.

"Tivoli Business Systems Manager is helping enhance the communication flow between the help desk and end users, between management layers and between IT and business units," explains Boggess. "Many phone calls that used to go back and forth are no longer needed because everyone has the information sitting on their desk.

"Tivoli Business Systems Manager helps us to communicate availability to the business units in their language," says Boggess. "It helps us better understand how long a service has been down regardless of what has caused the service to break."

*"Tivoli Business Systems Manager helps us integrate a combination of Tivoli software and other tools to better understand how various IT events affect the availability of business-critical processes."*

Dave Boggess  
Senior IT Systems Analyst  
Enterprise Systems Management  
Architect  
The Principal Financial Group



### **Future: managing services levels**

According to Boggess, the IT organization has just begun to tap into the capabilities of Tivoli Business Systems Manager and identify which business and application views to create. Additionally, the company is working with IBM to leverage data from Tivoli Business Systems Manager to generate detailed SLA reports on outages for the business units. These reports describe when an application was not available and how long an outage lasted.

“The overall benefit of Tivoli Business Systems Manager is the ability to consolidate events from different event sources into a business perspective. It’s improving how IT can positively affect our business operations,” says Boggess.

### **To learn more**

For information about Tivoli Performance & Availability management solutions and integrated solutions from IBM, contact your IBM sales representative or visit [\*\*ibm.com/tivoli\*\*](http://ibm.com/tivoli)

### **Tivoli software from IBM**

An integral part of the comprehensive IBM e-business infrastructure solution, Tivoli technology management software helps traditional enterprises, emerging e-businesses and Internet businesses worldwide maximize their existing and future technology investments. Backed by world-class IBM services, support and research, Tivoli software provides a seamlessly integrated and flexible e-business infrastructure management solution that uses robust security to connect employees, business partners and customers.

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