

"Our SLAs Guarantee High Levels of Service, Don't They?"

Working with customers of varying sizes and industries, Entuity has amassed significant experience in identifying and diagnosing network risk factors. Even companies who had implemented what they thought were proactive policies were surprised and blind sided by what Entuity network management software found lurking just below the surface of their networks. The basis for most issues was that the companies simply did not know enough about their network's health and were unaware of the impending danger. This paper is the third in a series where we look at common misconceptions about

network management through the real-life experiences of various companies. The aim of each issue is to bring to light network risk factors, quantify those risks with examples, and—most importantly—give you the prescription to keep your network from becoming terminal to your business.

SLAs: Carrot or Stick?

Network instability has a direct, negative impact on service level agreements to the detriment of both the provider and the recipient of the service. And so, an agreed upon level of service is determined, contracted, measured, and billed: deliver as contracted and the provider will get paid and there will be no penalties. Better yet, deliver above agreed levels and there could be performance bonuses.

On the other hand, if service levels are not met, the penalties can be severe. As with network crashes, the likelihood of a service being completely down is relatively small, but even intermittent interruptions can cause huge penalties come billing time.

Either approach—carrot or stick—is common with managed service providers (MSPs) and finding a way to consistently deliver a win-win for customers and service providers is very important.

MSPs Feel the Pain

SLA penalties as well as operational expenses were concerns for an international MSP as they were growing and winning new customers globally.

With their former management toolset and methods of work, one network engineer was required for every ten new customers added. Their use of several management tools led to silo-based management, which became increasingly ineffective, raising costs for staffing, training, integration, operations, and maintenance. Naturally, this made it harder for the MSP to guarantee SLA levels that would meet their customers' requirements and put them at increasing risk of penalty.

As a result, they decided to look for a solution that would simplify and unify infrastructure monitoring with a single software product that would improve the efficiency of their operations and provide clear reports that they could use to share SLA metrics with customers.

Entuity Decreases Operational Costs

Following an extensive evaluation, the MSP chose Entuity as their network management solution. It was the only solution that not only met their technical requirements but allowed them the deployment flexibility required in a service provider environment.

With new methodologies based on Entuity, the MSP was able to successfully take on fifty new customers without additional engineering personnel, avoiding more than \$500,000 in annual operational expense. These Entuity capabilities have been key to their success:

Flexible License Management/Control. Gives greater control of customer environments and saves on licensing costs by letting providers easily manage and un-manage devices and sub devices.

SLA Reporting. Delivers detailed reports that demonstrate the achievement of SLA targets and provides the option to let customers monitor their services through Entuity in real time.

Multitenancy. Enables providers to co-locate customers on the same monitoring servers and devices while enabling role-based access to customers, who see only their services.

Elemental Performance. Allows for continuous monitoring of network performance to provide early warnings of degradation using a variety of methods such as SNMP, syslog, LLDP, SONMP, flow, QoS, CDP, IP SLA (DHCP, UDP, ICMP, HTTP, and Jitter), and more.

Capacity Planning. Provides several capacity planning heat map reports that allow MSPs to track things like port usage and spare capacity, inbound and outbound faults, and memory and CPU utilization

Other Benefits to MSPs

Granular pricing and licensing. Distributed licensing allows for allocating licenses exactly where needed. Flexible licensing structure includes device, object, perpetual, subscription-based, or customized licensing. Ability to un-manage ports means you pay for only what you manage.

Improved price quotes. Automatic discovery of all monitored devices on a network enables quick and accurate identification of the IT infrastructure and, in turn, improves the accuracy of price quotes for MSP services.

Fast and efficient expansion. Entuity delivers class-leading per-server capacity. Scaling is a straightforward matter of adding and linking additional all-in-one servers. It is nearly unlimited and transparent to users.

Larger selection of service offerings. Entuity's extensible processing engine enables the fast addition of new devices to support rapid roll out of attractive new services.

Protection of premium level customers. Entuity continually monitors the network infrastructure for impacts on business services. This enables proper prioritization of trouble shooting and repair efforts to ensure that premium service customers are least affected

Summary

The key to resolving the carrot or stick predicament is to avoid it in the first place. With Entuity, the company is now serving their customers—and themselves—even better. They have improved the efficiency of their operations, achieved greater flexibility in taking on new devices, gained deeper network insight, and used customizable SLA reporting capabilities to easily share information with their customers.

About Entuity

Entuity takes the work out of network management. Our highly automated, unified enterprise-class solution puts deep network insight at your fingertips, frees IT staff to focus on strategic projects and easily integrates with major frameworks and networking environments. Entuity's support and services teams are frequently praised for their rapid response, networking expertise and involvement in special engagements. Founded in 1997 by two senior-level IT executives from the financial industry, Entuity is headquartered in London with US operations in Boston.