SOLARWINDS DELIVERS NETWORK VISIBILITY AND CONTROL TO CONSOLIDATED MINERALS' VAST NETWORK

About Consolidated Minerals

Consolidated Minerals is a global manganese producer with mining operations at Woodie Woodie in Western Australia and Nsuta in Ghana.

Challenge

One of the main challenges for Consolidated Minerals' network in Australia is distance. Consolidated Minerals monitors over 200km of privately-owned microwave network links in a remote region of the Pilbara in Western Australia from its headquarters in West Perth. The network delivers communications to the site's operations in very difficult to reach locations. The challenging geographical region and extreme weather conditions have the potential to make the network vulnerable and problems difficult to diagnose and rectify – with some locations unable to be accessed at times due to severe weather events. Communications is so important to the business that, should communications cease due to a network fault or other issue, mining pit operations may be forced to stop for safety reasons.

Stacey Squire, ICT Manager of Consolidated Minerals in Australia, needed to ensure his team could view real-time intelligent data for immediate crisis management, reporting and auditing and to better pinpoint issues in order to introduce a preventative strategy to avoid similar scenarios occurring in the future.

The organisation also needed technology capability that could adapt and scale with the infrastructure as scope and capacity needs increased in line with the business' growth strategy.

Whilst Consolidated Minerals outsources its network capability to a major Australian telecommunications provider, the business still has a requirement to ensure it has full visibility of the network's health to prevent and quickly mitigate issues.

Due to the nature of its business, Consolidated Minerals operates a very LAN heavy IT environment with the WAN environment being quite disparate; this means a vast amount of information passes through the network making it very difficult to obtain clear end-to-end visibility.
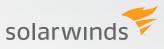
> **" Using SolarWinds was necessary to ensure that we had the capabilities to adapt for future scaling and infrastructure. "**
>
> Stacey Squire, ICT Manager, Consolidated Minerals

CONSOLIDATED MINERALS

- Monitors over 200km of privately-owned microwave network links in remote Western Australia
- 700 Cisco devices including Cisco VoIP telephones
- Approximately 1,000 devices on the network including laptops and tablets
- Collects proactive usage statistics on PCs to easily validate user concerns about issues such as poor performance

Squire explains, "Using a car analogy, before adopting a SolarWinds solution all we could see was that the temperature gauge was hot, but we really wanted to pinpoint to understand why the temperature gauge was hot. We needed intelligent information that would allow us to make good business decisions and form accurate conclusions about what we needed to do to resolve issues and prevent them in the future."

Solution

Consolidated Minerals needed greater network visibility to react quickly to issues arising around network performance, repairs, and allocation. The company implemented SolarWinds' Network Performance Monitor, NetFlow Traffic Analyzer, Network Configuration Manager and VoIP & Network Quality Manager to help analyse network health in real-time to report on and resolve any potential performance issues and prevent them from happening in the future.

Squire explains, "A high-risk issue arose when an air conditioner at one of our operation centres failed. Luckily, because of SolarWinds the problem was flagged early enough for us to fix it quickly and also report back to the business on the exact cause of the problem. This avoided a major equipment failure due to overheating, meaning the SolarWinds investment paid for itself during that one incident."

Consolidated Minerals also requires access to historical data and reporting to ascertain average network performance levels in order to act quickly when these normal levels deviated from the mean. The SolarWinds solution is pivotal in enabling a clear audit trail of historical event data.

"The historical data that SolarWinds allowed us to access lets us easily see when an issue had graduated from something minor into a serious problem. It also gives us the ability to effectively audit the network to see what's actually occurring," said Squire.

Business Benefits and Results

SolarWinds has allowed Consolidated Minerals to operate and manage network health and critical issues more effectively. With a real-time view of data, the company can easily access multiple data sources from the one location.

"SolarWinds gives Consolidated Minerals an end-to-end view of network infrastructure in the one location so I can see when we're under resourced, over allocated, or over or under provisioned," said Squire.

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Furthermore, the solution has allowed Squire and his team to streamline the reporting process, saving a lot of time and ultimately costs. This has also helped enable the continued improvement of auditing tools, key to managing bottom line costs.

"There are very few products that combine the same feature sets under a single pane of glass and interface that's available from SolarWinds that don't require us to collect and make sense of data from numerous sources," said Squire.

"The previous arrangement we had in place didn't allow us to draw strong and accurate conclusions about what we needed to do to resolve an issue as it arose. We had to make the move from reactive to proactive and SolarWinds has enabled us to do just that and also make critical decisions based on real-time and relevant data," he said.

ABOUT SOLARWINDS

SolarWinds provides powerful and affordable IT management software to customers worldwide from Fortune 500® enterprises to small businesses, government agencies and educational institutions. We are committed to focusing exclusively on IT Pros, and strive to eliminate the complexity that they have been forced to accept from traditional enterprise software vendors. Regardless of where the IT asset or user sits, SolarWinds delivers products that are easy to find, buy, use, maintain, and scale while providing the power to address all key areas of the infrastructure from on premises to the Cloud. Our solutions are rooted in our deep connection to our user base, which interacts in our thwack® online community to solve problems, share technology and best practices, and directly participate in our product development process. Learn more today at http://www.solarwinds.com/.

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