SuSE chooses DB2 for Linux to enhance its own CRM system.

Overview

- ***Application***
  SuSE Trouble Ticket System, a CRM solution for responding to customer support requests
- ***Business Benefits***
  Better customer service; high availability and reliability; ability to set and meet service level commitments; greater insight into contract usage leading to higher profitability
- ***Software***
  IBM DB2® Universal Database™ Enterprise Edition for Linux®, Version 7.1

One of the largest Linux distributors in the world, SuSE had its choice of databases when it came time to rebuild its SuSE Trouble Ticket System, and it chose IBM DB2 Universal Database for Linux.

Linux is fast gaining ground as a cost-effective, reliable and enterprise-worthy operating system. Linux programmers and support personnel, too, are growing in numbers. Even so, companies adopting Linux still want the reassurance that support will be readily available whenever they need it. That's why world-class Linux software packager and distributor SuSE Linux AG (SuSE) provides free, 60-day installation support with all its Linux packages, as well as extended support contracts for businesses.

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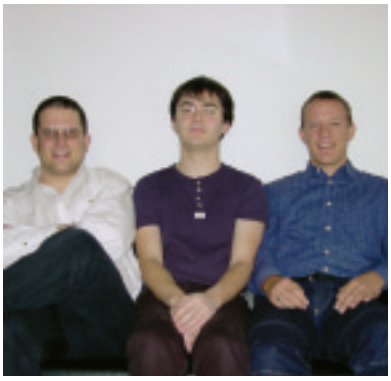
–Dirk Lerner, Support/Database Management, SuSE Linux AG



Left to right: Dirk Lerner, Support Database/ Management; Carsten Gross, Developer; Sebastian Wormser, Developer.

Called on to provide flawless technical support in its home-base country of Germany as well as throughout Europe, SuSE relied on its home-grown SuSE Trouble Ticket System (STTS) to supply its support engineers in Germany with up-to-date information on customers, their contracts and their service histories. Unfortunately, the system SuSE used to manage most of its contracts crashed frequently and could not retrieve complex service histories in a timely fashion, making it difficult for support engineers to resolve telephone and e-mail service requests efficiently.

SuSE decided it had to create a new customer relationship management (CRM) system capable of providing all of its 3,600 support customers the same high level of service.

The company needed an application that was reliable, scalable and could also provide efficient workflow capabilities. Since the company could not find software on the market to meet its needs, SuSE developed its own program in PERL code. In its search for a database to manage customer, contract, history, product and other information, SuSE evaluated IBM DB2 Universal Database against a third-party database and an open-source database. In the end, SuSE chose DB2, deeming the competing products too costly and not robust enough for its enterprise applications. And according to Dirk Lerner, support/database management at SuSE, "We tested DB2 extensively and were very enthusiastic over its performance and scalability, and we also had the support resources for DB2."

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>
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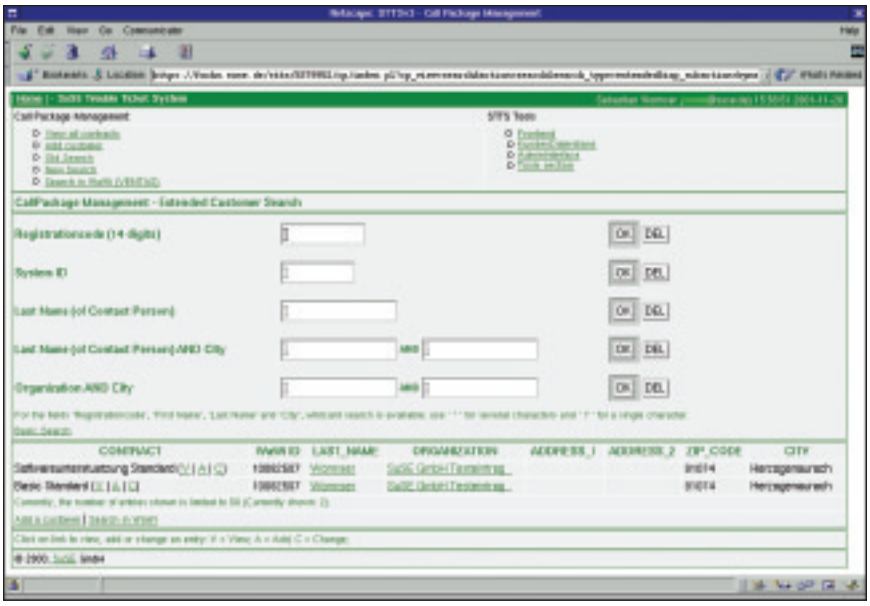
"Our DB2 solution provides outstanding service to all of our support customers, no matter the complexity of each of their contracts," says Lerner. "As for reliability, in the 13 months that the SuSE STTS solution has been live, there have been no outages, no crashes and the performance has been consistently excellent. By porting to DB2 Universal Database for Linux, we have achieved the level of reliability and scalability necessary for running our fast-growing and highly available CRM solution."



With DB2 Universal Database the SuSE Trouble Ticket System has been trouble-free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to help customers solve their problems.

Measurably better customer service

With DB2 Universal Database Enterprise Edition for Linux, Version 7.1, and Apache Web Server on an Intel-based server running Linux, SuSE now has a Web-based STTS accessible to 200 to 300 support staff and other internal business users.

Customers with support contracts can reach SuSE three ways: by e-mail, by phone and over the Web. The new system's workflow manager quickly matches service requests with specialists that have the appropriate qualifications. Since SuSE can perform online backups of DB2, and there is no need to take the system offline for nightly maintenance, the new STTS is available 24 hours a day.

The robust DB2 for Linux database server easily manages multilevel service agreements with specific reaction times ranging from eight hours to one hour, prioritizing the workload according to the length of time left to respond. This higher level of control built into the system results in better customer service, which SuSE now has a way to measure using actual reaction times recorded by the system.

Also, the database can be queried to obtain statistics on contract usage, which leads to more profitable business decisions. Comments Lerner, "By writing SQL queries, I can get statistics that help us scale our products more successfully. Thanks to DB2, we've been able to create a better way of doing business for SuSE."

For more information

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