

Staying focused on the business through strategic outsourcing

Company Background:

Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is an industry analyst and consulting firm that advises companies regarding their IT business management strategy. From venture-funded start-up companies like Splunk and newScale to global market leaders like Hewlett-Packard, Citrix and Novell, EMA provides objective insight into the real world business value of emerging and established technologies. EMA's sole focus on IT management technologies ensures clients, at every stage of their business life cycle, receive the highest caliber of research, analysis and consulting services possible.

Unlike the demise of the technology market in the 1990s, today's economic crisis has affected IT spending but on a different scale. Market research indicates that while IT spending overall is modestly decreasing, management software as applied to certain key areas, such as virtualization, process automation and Configuration Management Database (CMDB) system adoption, appear to be a focused area for continued spending. IT organizations and the businesses they support are looking to work smarter, leaner and differently than before, thus fueling a strategic interest in IT business management technologies.

In 2006-2007, EMA experienced the effects of this business shift first hand. Client demand for services surged, more than doubling by the end of 2007; six new IT management experts and two new salespeople were hired and the company planned to move its corporate headquarters into a larger building in Boulder, CO to ensure it could scale accordingly to meet continued company growth.

Since 1996, EMA has outsourced its IT functions to various vendors, some locally and others out of state. But this rapid growth surge highlighted the weaknesses of a multi-vendor outsourcing plan and underscored the importance of having a single, regional expert partner.

Multi-Vendor Trouble-Shooting

With a highly dispersed client base and an industry expert reputation, EMA analysts are continuously traveling to client sites, attending industry tradeshows, speaking at conferences or working remotely. On the road, EMA analysts require secure access to their email and network based storage to easily download, share and manage confidential documents anytime, anywhere. When in the office, EMA analysts use their desktops to continue work as usual and expect seamless access to files, document changes and client briefing information gathered during their business travel.

EMA outsourced everything from Web site hosting and network based storage to email and network monitoring. "Performance and service was always an issue, but we all were too busy and just worked through the problems and stayed focused on clients," said Dan

Twing, Chief Operating Officer. Vendor issues ranged from miscommunications and billing discrepancies to network storage issues, web site downtime, limited service support and expensive on-site contracting support. Some vendors were acquired and service levels deteriorated even more, which further fueled EMA's discontent.

In 2007, after a string of vendor incidents and the company's plans to relocate and add more staff, EMA replaced its multi-vendor approach with Denver-based 3t Systems, Inc. 3t Systems developed a solution to transition EMA's existing outsourced efforts and support additional services that were not previously supported, including desktop management and on-site client support. In less than one month, EMA's distributed outsourced IT effort was consolidated under one managed services contract.

With the new managed services contract, EMA gained more value for their IT investment, including:

- 24x7 on-demand, on-site client support to troubleshoot IT problems
- Centralized outsourced IT operations with one, local point of contact
- Access to a broad spectrum of additional vendor services and experts to advance EMA's IT operations

People Make the Difference

While advancements in technology have created a pseudo face-to-face working experience, there is no substitute for the real thing. "Our previous outsourcing relationship was built on phone calls, remote network monitoring and generic 800 customer service support," said Twing. "3t Systems took our expectations to new heights and showed us the business value of a handshake."

With offices in Denver, Fort Collins and Greenwood Village, 3t Systems employs a dedicated team of technical experts that can be deployed within 2-4 hours to a client's office on-demand to provide on-site support 24x7. 3t Systems' proximity to EMA's Boulder office proved invaluable when the company moved offices in April 2007. 3t Systems engineers were onsite setting up desktops, installing software, configuring the network and managing third-party vendors, like Qwest. 3t Systems helped EMA move its 25-person office in two days with minimal downtime per employee.

As a Managed Services customer, EMA had the flexibility to select which services 3t Systems would host and negotiate a set monthly fee based on selected services only. EMA's customized solution includes dedicated support for business critical functions such as server hosting, Internet connection, network security, business applications, and network backup. While the Managed Services contract supports these primary business functions, EMA has leveraged other 3t Systems resources and services to address isolated issues. "We have been nothing short of impressed with 3t Systems' commitment to service, support and client satisfaction. Their people and proximity to our office truly make the difference, said Twing."

"As a service business, our time is better spent servicing clients not troubleshooting IT issues."

Dan Twing
Chief Operating Officer
Enterprise Management
Associates

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