

Investment Management firm finds relief for single IT resource with automated IT management software

A case study on NCM Capital Management and UNAPEN's managed IT services offering, ITCOMPLETE™ Professional level

“I used to spend 75–80% of my time doing what ITCOMPLETE does now.”

- Betty Bynum, Information Systems Manager, NCM



Introduction

NCM Capital (NCM), a Durham, North Carolina based firm, has been working for over a decade to keep their IT infrastructure current and powerful enough to support their firm and its clients. NCM has been in business since 1986 and currently manages approximately two billion dollars in assets and is one of the largest privately held investment money managers in North Carolina.

In 1997, NCM's technology needs began to surpass the capabilities of their then-current network. They turned to UNAPEN, Inc. to begin to plan for IT upgrades and a new infrastructure necessary to support the growing investment management firm.

Betty Bynum has been with NCM Capital for 17 years, 12 of those spent as their Information Systems Manager. Previously, Betty was the Systems Administrator with Legal Services of North Carolina.

Over the years, NCM worked to update and modernize their technology and network environment. This included modernizing their entire IT infrastructure, converting to a new portfolio accounting system, enhancing their business continuity solution and implementing two custom applications: one for trade order management and optimization, and one to assist with the Operations Department processes.

By 2003, the single IT resource at NCM, Betty Bynum, was responsible for keeping the daily maintenance and monitoring of the new system, which had grown to include over 50 PCs and 10 servers, under control. She recalled, "I had to remember to check logs or wait for an issue to arise before I could respond. There was no real-time monitoring of the system." Bynum's daily task load of supporting users, deploying application updates and security patches as well monitoring hardware and software errors left little time for higher level initiatives. She said, "Without the ongoing support from UNAPEN, I would have never had time to focus on any projects because of all of my daily tasks."

Coming up:

Would management see ITComplete as a valuable tool or just another added cost associated with IT?

When Bynum heard that UNAPEN had begun to provide a managed IT support package called ITComplete, she immediately found value in such a system. The professional level of this offering would allow Bynum to use the ITComplete software tools to automatically monitor her infrastructure, and would proactively alert her to problems. She said, "I was tired of letting my infrastructure dictate my day. I needed a solution that would allow me to be in control of my system so that the people in my firm wouldn't have to work around the technology they depended on – the technology would work for them."

Her only hesitation was how software for the IT Department would fit in NCM's budget. Would management see ITComplete as valuable tool, or just another added cost associated with IT?

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Bynum didn't view ITComplete as a threat to her position at NCM; she saw it as an opportunity. Once relieved of the mundane tasks of daily monitoring, she would be able to focus her skills and abilities on higher level projects that would truly benefit from her expertise.

At first, NCM put the ITComplete software on only the most critical machines, but Bynum still saw the value of the product immediately. She remembered, "As soon as I had to install a new version of Microsoft Office, I thought, 'This will be great.'" ITComplete allows you to install software once and simply push it out to machines. Bynum said, "Now it's hard to imagine having to sit down at every computer in order to install updates."

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NCM quickly installed ITComplete on the rest of their computers and servers, and it didn’t take long for Bynum to start appreciating the value of the automated management of her network. She said, “There’s security in knowing what’s going on with the machines, knowing what computers are missing patches and who’s logged in to what machine.” ITComplete also automatically records information about the computers, such as the serial number, so Bynum no longer has to go to the individual machines to find out, or maintain a list herself. Bynum continued, “IT management is less disruptive now because it’s proactive. Now, I can tell someone that I need to replace their hard drive before it’s going to crash. We don’t have to wait for a problem to arise before we fix it anymore.” There is no denying the benefit of ITComplete for NCM when Betty is able to say, “I used to spend 75 – 80% of my time doing what ITComplete does now.”

Concluding Thoughts

ITComplete has allowed Betty Bynum to expand her role at NCM and has shifted UNAPEN into a more strategic role. NCM is now getting more “bang for their buck” in terms of Bynum and UNAPEN, and they have not had to add to IT staff as they’ve grown.

For Bynum, ITComplete has also allowed her to stay dedicated to her life outside of computers, when necessary. She said, “Shortly after we installed ITComplete, my mom was sick and I had to be home with her for several weeks. I was able to work from home and ITComplete made that much easier. I could tell if there was a problem and I could remote into the machine and handle it. ITComplete made it much easier for me to be home with my mom when I needed to.”

About UNAPEN and ITCOMPLETE™

UNAPEN, founded in 1991, has been providing IT support and services for a wide variety of companies throughout the country. In 2001, UNAPEN began to move toward a more managed service model of providing IT support. ITCOMPLETE, with automated processes and remotely managed support, was first released in 2006. UNAPEN's technology experts specialize in streamlining operations and workflow across organizations to help your business grow, minimize overhead and provide you a strategic competitive edge over other firms. UNAPEN also offers client relationship management and automated client reporting software tailored for firms in the financial services industry. For more information, visit www.unapen.com or call (203) 269-6111.