SUMITOMO LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

IT optimization standardizes and aligns virtual infrastructure with business needs

ESSENTIALS

Business Challenge
Optimize the IT infrastructure

EMC Solutions and Services
• EMC Consulting IT Transformation services: infrastructure policies, transformation roadmap, and service catalog
• EMC Symmetrix VMAX

Results
• Moved from silos of IT to standardized virtualized infrastructure
• Aligned IT with business requirements to meet service levels cost-effectively
• Optimized infrastructure for cloud

MAKING THE FUTURE STRONGER

The Sumitomo Life Insurance Company is a mutual life insurance company in Japan. The company, which was founded in 1907 and has its headquarters in Osaka, strives to maintain the trust of its customers by reliably delivering on its "Making Your Future Stronger" brand promise.

Information management is a critical aspect of the company’s success, and Sumitomo Life Insurance Company continually evolves and improves its IT infrastructure and operations to better serve its customers and increase its competitiveness. To that end, the company planned a comprehensive optimization of its IT infrastructure.

“Through standardization of systems across the enterprise, we knew we could maximize IT investments, decrease system deployment time, and streamline resource allocation,” says Toru Shiomitsu, deputy director and chief of System Planning in the Information Systems Division at Sumitomo Life Insurance Company.

OPTIMIZATION IS MORE THAN VIRTUALIZATION

The Information Systems Division had already achieved optimization through the integration and standardization of systems in its mainframe environment. However, its open systems environment proved more challenging. Systems in this environment had been developed separately and administered independently for years. With more than 150 siloed systems running on roughly 1,000 servers with different operating rules and discrete management, there was a significant opportunity to cut costs, reduce risk, and improve service.

"At first we considered the pooling of resources or using virtualization technology to integrate the servers, but that amounts to mere system integration,” says Shiomitsu. "For total optimization, we needed to create an infrastructure based on the importance of each service."

Some systems required high availability and needed to run 24x7, while others, even if unavailable for an extended time, had little business impact.

"The problem was that the service levels of each system were determined individually, with no reference to each other, and that's why we needed to create a common standard for optimizing the service level and configurations across all our systems,” explains Shiomitsu.

AN OBJECTIVE STANDARD

To help define an objective standard for prioritization, and rationalize requirements across divisions, the company decided to engage external consultants.
"In the beginning, there was resistance to using consultants," says Akira Mori, director of System Administration in the Information Systems Division at Sumitomo Life Insurance Company. "The employees in the Information Systems Division argued that they had a better understanding of the infrastructure than anyone else. We concluded, however, that in order to be successful in any major transformation, we needed an objective perspective from an outside organization."

The Sumitomo Life Insurance team began by examining proposals from several consulting firms. After careful comparison, Sumitomo Life Insurance Company selected EMC Consulting.

"The deciding factor was that EMC had the 'template' that matched our objective for comprehensive infrastructure optimization," says Mori.

**MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS**

Sumitomo Life Insurance Company began working with EMC consultants to create an optimization policy, roadmap, and service catalog that would gain acceptance across the company.

Because classification of services and definition of service levels spanned different services, division heads in charge of the development, maintenance, and operation of each system in each of the bank’s IT subsidiaries were asked to participate as stakeholders in the project.

“As you would expect, each member had different views on the service levels,” says Shiomitsu. “But we managed to reach a consensus in a shorter time than expected, thanks to EMC and their unparalleled expertise in system classification."

“...The EMC consultants were very enthusiastic, freely exchanging their ideas with us and offering leadership and guidance in our discussions. To be honest, their contribution was a key factor in organizing our ideas.”

Toru Shiomitsu, Deputy Director and Chief of System Planning, Information Systems Division, Sumitomo Life Insurance Company

The project team assessed, classified, and prioritized systems based on a number of factors. To help create a Service Catalog, EMC consultants performed a Business Impact Analysis, assessing each system by "impact" (primarily, what happens when the system stops) and "priority" (primarily, order of system recovery), as well as examining system aspects such as quality targets, volume, cycle, and technology dependence.

“The process ignited some heated discussions about integration and separation,” says Shiomitsu. “To control costs, we needed to integrate all systems. However, there were some aspects, such as confidentiality and security, which had to be separated from the integration. By having thorough discussions, we came up with an integration policy and a separation policy. These intensive explorations gave rise to the new ideas that we piloted in this project.”

"...The EMC consultants were very enthusiastic, freely exchanging their ideas with us and offering leadership and guidance in our discussions,” adds Shiomitsu. “To be honest, their contribution was a key factor in organizing our ideas.”
**ALIGNING SERVICE LEVEL AND BUSINESS IMPACT**

Once the team members had clarified processes in each business division, including Personal Insurance, Corporate Insurance, Asset Management, and General Administration, they sorted out the dependencies between processes and systems. Each system was put into one of four classifications: SSA (Very High), SA (High), A (Medium) and B (Low).

“Simply put, this is a tool for performing gap analysis on whether each system is operating at an appropriate service level from the perspective of business impact,” says Masakazu Ota, director of IT Architecture at Sumitomo Life Information Systems Co., Ltd., and responsible for the Total Optimization of IT Infrastructure project.

For example, systems that are dedicated to providing services to customers were deemed SSA class, meaning they had to operate around-the-clock. General administration applications for employees, on the other hand, were defined as A or B class and assigned a lower priority, reducing overall operating costs.

The result provides a visualization of the correlation between business processes and systems across the entire environment.

“We can also use this tool to make adjustments and improvements to overall system performance,” says Ota. "In addition to providing the template, the EMC consultants were excellent in facilitating these discussions, which allowed us to easily define the appropriate class for each application."

**BUILDING AN INTEGRATED VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT**

With a class for each system defined, the company then moved on to building an integrated virtual environment for application deployment.

"First, we grouped platforms based on service level: 'Critical' and 'Other,'" says Mori. "When it is time to renew an application, we renew them one-by-one, according to this classification."

For servers and systems that are directly accessed from outside the company, and for development and testing environments, a policy was defined to minimize any separation of systems, while also taking security and governance into account.

Sumitomo Life Insurance Company then developed a virtualized integrated infrastructure to become the new in-house standard. When it came to storage, although the company did not factor its relationship with EMC Consulting into the evaluation process, it ended up choosing EMC storage technology.

“We decided that EMC Symmetrix® VMAX® was the ideal storage solution,” says Ota. The deciding factors, he says, “…were high availability and high performance that can withstand the operation of our defined SSA class systems, as well as compatibility with VMware® vSphere”, our virtualization platform.”

With successful cutover of the integrated virtual environment, the company is now finishing the first phase of the migration of the Internal Sales System.

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Masakazu Ota, Director, IT Architecture at Sumitomo Life Information Systems Co., Ltd.
GROUPING SUBSIDIARIES IN A PRIVATE CLOUD

Over the next five years, the company will upgrade its entire open systems environment to the next-generation platform, while continuing to evolve its plan for the future generation of IT infrastructure.

“The next step is to focus on the subsidiaries and the total optimization of the entire Sumitomo Life Group to reduce TCO, increase the security of our systems, and increase the use of private cloud,” says Shiomitsu. “We created a roadmap for the transition. Our task now is to follow this roadmap.”

“In the future, we would like to promote the use of a private cloud for all of Sumitomo’s subsidiaries,” says Ota. “To do so, we need to consider increasing automation and consolidating services through our integrated and virtualized environment. Thanks to this project, we can now visualize our future IT direction and strategy with more clarity.”

LOOK TO EMC GLOBAL SERVICES TO DELIVER RESULTS

EMC Global Services provides the strategic guidance and technology expertise organizations need to address their business and information infrastructure challenges and derive the maximum value from their information assets and investments. We are committed to exceptional total customer experience through service excellence. Our 15,000+ professional and support service experts worldwide, plus a global network of alliances and partners, leverage proven methodologies, industry best practices, and experience and knowledge derived from EMC’s 33-year information-centric heritage to address the full spectrum of customer needs across the information lifecycle: strategize, advise, architect, implement, manage, and support.

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