

Capacity Optimization

Don't guess KNOW!

'Do more with less' is the new economy mantra, forcing CIOs to align business strategies with IT goals – and do it all on an increasingly tight budget. But savvy CIOs are discovering they can achieve both goals by starting with capacity optimization.

Historically, data centers were considered a success if they simply didn't fail. They could achieve this by over provisioning every necessary resource. But that singular approach didn't provide organizations with the data they needed to create a plan for success. "Many organizations have little insight into how efficiently their compute environments are performing," says Chris Pinc, EVP of Data Center Solutions at N'compass Inc., a Minneapolis technology consulting company. "They're simply guessing – and often making costly decisions for IT and for the business they support."

Today, capacity planning provides a looking glass, allowing CIOs to discover historical trends and future projections in use and cost. They can then adapt their compute environments accordingly. "The goal with our fundamental services is to help uncover opportunities to reduce business costs and to create a better Business/IT alignment," explains Pinc. "And for today's CIO, it's all about increasing efficiency to provide value and impact the bottom line. Essentially, we're helping IT speak today's business language."

growing understanding that IT must look more closely at their own operations to uncover cost-savings opportunities and to enable the revenue generating activities for the organization. Recent data reveals the wisdom of capacity optimization to help achieve that goal. Symantec Corp. reported in 2007 that the average company expanded storage by 60%, while average use of that expanded storage was only 33%. According to IDC Research Center, that chasm is costing organizations over \$140 billion worldwide each year – critical funds they could be channeling toward business growth.

This looking glass is critical, according to Pinc. "It is imperative to understand the changing compute environment on a near real-time basis. That provides a historical record we can use for more accurate availability and cost forecasting." Armed with this knowledge, the managed services team at N'compass can then recommend appropriate action to ensure that the businesses relying on IT are appropriately supported.

However, appropriate action doesn't necessarily mean reducing cost and investment. Capacity optimization allows critical insight that leads to strategic, sometimes unforeseen, action. An organization's true cost to compute, supported through a capacity optimization engagement, may show that the company can actually be more profitable by expanding capacity. For organizations that think they can simply estimate their computing environment needs without supporting data, Pinc has practical advice he shares with all N'compass clients. "Knowing is always better than guessing. Our fundamental services take out the guesswork."

And for today's CIO, whose priorities include balancing the business needs of the organization with those of IT, there's no room for guesswork.

—RICHARD E. HALL



Chris Pinc, EVP of Data Center Solutions at N'compass Inc.

Pinc has his finger on what motivates today's CIO. A recent CIOinsight.com survey revealed that the top three priorities for CIOs are to Drive Strategic Use of Information (42%), Align IT Strategy with Corporate Strategy (41%), and Reduce Business Costs (32%). These priorities reflect the