

Aware Licensing Savvy Brings Reduced Costs, High Availability to Budco

Headquartered in Highland Park, Mich., Budco helps corporations address business communication problems by developing and executing custom-designed marketing and distribution initiatives. The company specializes in creating multiple touch-points for customers, including custom direct mail programs, electronic marketing, eStores and associated fulfillment services. With nearly \$100 million in annual revenues, the company boasts clients such as DaimlerChrysler, Ford Motor Company, HoneyBaked Ham and Walt Disney.

Because customers rely on Budco's ability to access databases and maintain electronic storerooms for their marketing initiatives, 24x7 availability of Budco's applications is business critical. When availability and scalability – barriers to growth – started to become issues, Budco turned to Aware Technologies, an expert in Oracle licensing, for help in negotiating an Oracle infrastructure agreement. The results were staggering — a solution that eliminates downtime and a savings of more than \$1 million.

The Challenge

In late 2004, Budco's infrastructure was stretched to the breaking point with mission-critical applications dependent on aging UNIX operating systems and hardware. Slow processing and unexpected server failures were negatively impacting the bottom line — not only in dollars, but in customer satisfaction as well.

"The major issue was reliability, although scalability was a close second," said Steve Swanson, chief information officer for Budco. "Due to repeated and unanticipated downtime, we were on the verge of our IT systems becoming a liability. To continue hosting customer sites and meeting our service level agreements, we had to make a large-scale change — one that would allow us to service clients effectively and continue to grow."

Swanson's preferred IT direction? Oracle Enterprise Database with Real Application Cluster (RAC) running on Dell Linux. Oracle RAC would allow the company to scale incrementally and eliminate downtime through use of clustered servers. "We've relied on Oracle software for more than 12 years and have always had great results," said Swanson. "We knew the latest RAC technology could revolutionize our IT environment."

With buy-in from the board, Swanson moved forward, but quickly encountered a major road block. The initial estimate from Oracle for license cost alone was well into seven figures.

"For a \$100 million company, the payback on that investment would have been years and years," said Swanson. "We had to regroup and consider our alternatives. We knew SQL Server was an option, and if we were ever going to change paths, now was the time to consider it. The cost of Oracle became a real fork in the road for us."

The Solution

Fortuitously, Swanson remembered meeting a company with unusual expertise at OracleWorld — Aware Technologies. Led by Deke Johnson, president and CEO, Aware's experts have years of experience inside Oracle sales and work with companies to guarantee the right licensing at the right price.

Aware Technologies uses a consultative approach to provide the best solution for the end user.



"Working with any software vendor can be a painful process," said Johnson. "Our mission is to use our experience, knowledge and relationships to help our customers acquire the software they need at a cost they can afford. Our job is to match the desired solution with a price that meets everyone's needs. Often, we have to help vendors understand why the deal is a good for everyone."

Swanson engaged Aware to help lower the cost of the Oracle infrastructure so Budco could afford to buy its preferred solution. To provide true comparison and prepare for all possibilities, Budco also asked Aware to price SQL Server. At Aware's request, Swanson provided the bottom-line budget and defined what Budco was truly prepared to spend on its infrastructure upgrade. Then, Johnson's team went to work, negotiating with the software vendors.

Through skilled mediation, Aware was successful in persuading Oracle to license the entire infrastructure at significant price reduction, saving Budco more than \$1 million.

Ultimately, the dramatically reduced Oracle price – combined with years of positive experience – swayed Budco's IT decision in favor of Oracle. Budco then acquired the licenses through Aware Technologies.

"The Aware team did a great job of first understanding our business needs and then staying on point with Oracle to help drive a winning deal for everyone involved," said Swanson. "Aware knows how Oracle thinks and broke the log jam for us when we weren't having success. Without Aware, we would have been forced to implement a lower quality solution and make significant changes to both our business and IT philosophy."

The Results

By utilizing Aware's licensing expertise, Budco realized an enormous savings of more than \$1 million, allowing the company to proceed down its preferred IT path.

"Aware truly goes the extra distance to help its customers reach their goals," said Swanson. "We were extremely impressed with the results Aware was able to achieve for our business. The team completely exceeded my expectations."

Once fully implemented, Budco expects the Oracle investment, specifically RAC, to transform its IT environment. Previously plagued with reliability and scalability issues, the company is thrilled with initial results. If a server fails, Budco's applications still keep running. RAC switches the applications over to the other two or three nodes in the cluster, allowing Budco to swap out the failed server without impacting performance.

"We're seeing a higher level of service provided to our customers, as well as a higher level of uptime from a metric and reporting perspective," said Swanson. "And that availability has really become a selling point for our customers. Thanks to Aware, our technology can grow ahead of our business needs."

To learn more about Aware Technologies, visit www.awaretechnologies.com.

To learn more about Budco, visit www.budco.com.

To learn more about Agilysys, visit www.agilysys.com.

Agilysys...

1-800-Key-Link
www.agilysys.com



KSG4043 02/06