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IBM is the world's largest IT services provider with revenues of around \$90bn annually. It is therefore perhaps fitting that in 2002, they secured the largest IT outsourcing contract in history. The deal with JP Morgan Chase, the investment bank, is worth a projected \$5bn over the proposed contract life. The demanding operational Service Levels created the need for rapid, real-time communication between support team members. IBM relies on Criticall systems to deliver the messages in time to key individuals.

It is hard to think of a higher profile IT outsourcing contract than the global deal between IBM and JP Morgan Chase (JPMC). JPMC's operations rely heavily on effective and functional IT. To keep the IT infrastructure working at peak levels and within the Service Level Agreement (SLA), IBM depended on a highly skilled service delivery team, many of whom were former JPMC employees. As system incidents occur, each is given a priority category, with the highest categories requiring the most urgent responses under the SLA. The most significant and complex operational issues typically require input from multiple specialists and skill areas, with the resolutions followed after interaction and discussion of options.

The main tool used by IBM to facilitate such Complex Incident Management was the voice conference "Bridge", where experts and senior managers called into a prearranged voice conference to discuss the topic in more detail. The senior team involved over 100 people and it was the responsibility of the Helpdesk Team to notify the relevant people each time, ahead of the planned voice conference. Time was clearly of the essence when co-ordinating such a large operational group.

IBM's requirement was therefore to have a system, which could support scores of helpdesk staff accessing it concurrently, as any one of them could get the call which required a conference bridge response. Furthermore, the system needed to be

easy to use and administer, so as not to distract helpdesk staff from their core operational roles. Lastly, the system needed to be **fast!** Experts and managers could not call into a conference bridge unless they knew it was happening, but there was an urgent need to respond as quickly as possible, in order to begin addressing the operational issue at hand. The result was a requirement to be able to send over 100 SMS/pager messages to the target recipients within 5 minutes reliably. This permitted the setting of live conference bridges at only 10 minutes notice. Criticall's solution was to provide the relevant IBM staff with access to its web-based EmergencyCall ASP service. The initial solution was implemented and functional within a week of the statement of requirement.

While functional and performance considerations were the initial priority, additional enhancements to the service became necessary as the importance of the system to overall contract service delivery became apparent. Availability of 99% was not adequate, as this meant over 7 hours a month of downtime was still within SLA, and the need to use the service was continuous. Criticall was therefore able to further enhance the service, providing a commitment to 99.995% availability, by replicating the service across both a Primary and a Secondary site. SMS/pager routing is to different providers from each site and the client is able to manually switch between the two as they wish.

IBM's contract manager described the decision to go with Criticall saying: "We have looked around the market for other solutions like this and they just aren't out there". So far, IBM have sent over 100,000 messages through the system and currently generate around 10,000 messages a month. The EmergencyCall ASP system is now used to communicate call updates and call closure, as well as the need for conference bridges. Ian Hammond, Criticall's CEO comments: "If the world's largest IT company entrusts us with such a key role on the world's largest IT outsourcing contract, then other customers can rightly enjoy that same level of confidence."

For further information about
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