Support service on a Saturday

The Background

A global company, with over 1,500 employees, provides customer relationship service programs to help businesses retain and grow their consumer base. For four decades, the company has been trusted by its clients, including nine Fortune 100 companies.

Within the Northern European operations, a mission-critical OpenVMS application served as the database of customer membership information and it ran on aging VAX servers. The IT Manager for European Operations had two growing concerns: He worried about the increasing possibility of the servers causing unplanned downtime, and he was completely unsatisfied with the level of support coming from his current IT infrastructure vendor.

After meeting with his counterparts in North America, they suggested using the Charon™ solution by Stromasys to lift and shift the application off the VAX hardware so it can continue to run, unhindered by aging technology. The IT Manager would not have to worry about unplanned downtime and better yet, the support team at Stromasys was highly recommended.

The IT Manager began to work with the Stromasys engineers to successfully shift the essential application to a Windows server running the Charon-VAX emulation solution. The migration went off without any issues and the application continued to run on the Windows server and with better performance.

The Challenge

With 30 years of experience, he was wary of support services until early on a Saturday morning when he received a call from the office. His co-worker told him that a Windows server had been shut down for routine maintenance. Unfortunately, the IT Manager had not been given notification that this maintenance was going to happen.

Following the shutdown, the mission-critical system, the Manager's responsibility, would not come back online. At that point in time, the entire Northern European operations was down, and 50 agents had no access to member data to assist any customers in their loyalty programs.

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legacy server emulation

The Solution

The system needed to be back online ASAP and the Manager's first thought was that it could be the Charon software preventing that from happening. He sent an email to the Stromasys support team, but it was Saturday so he didn't think he would get a response.

To his surprise, a Stromasys engineer, Alexandre Souf, replied within an hour with eight other engineers CC'd on the email. Working with Alex, they discovered it wasn't the Charon emulator and yet, the system was still not booting. Alex stayed on the phone with the IT Manager to troubleshoot the problem and they eventually found that it was an OpenVMS system issue that had been caused by an external network change. Alex continued to work with the Manager as they ran the checks to get the system back online.

The Result

Once the system was back online, Alex followed up to make sure that everything was running smoothly. Internally, the IT department put in place new procedures to ensure the Manager is ready the next time systems are shut down for maintenance.

The IT Manager was ecstatic about the Charon software and Stromasys support, "It was such a relief to get an immediate response from the Stromasys support team, even though the problem was not Charon. Their software is a great solution for legacy hardware, and their support makes the product outstanding."