



SoftLayer Technologies

Many companies rely on IT service providers to outsource all or parts of their data centers. With SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server, SoftLayer has expanded its business to support a new market of enterprise customers and can provision new Linux* servers in a matter of hours.

Overview

Headquartered in Plano, Texas, SoftLayer provides industry-leading, on-demand virtual data center services on a global basis from facilities in Dallas, TX; Seattle, WA; and Washington, DC. SoftLayer integrates all facets of IT to innovate fully automated solutions. This empowers customers with complete control, security, scalability and ease-of-management.

Challenge

With 20,000 servers, SoftLayer delivers next-generation Web hosting and virtualized data center services to 5,500 customers—from small businesses to Fortune 50 companies. The company aims to provide a full-spectrum of cost-effective services for its customers and offers a broad portfolio of operating systems.

Nearly 60 percent of SoftLayer's customers run some flavor of Linux. The company wanted to expand its customer base by offering SUSE Linux Enterprise to customers seeking an enterprise-level Linux platform.

Solution

SoftLayer selected SUSE Linux Enterprise Server with built-in Xen* virtualization to add to its portfolio of hosted platforms, and selected Novell® ZENworks® Linux Management to

automate the provisioning and management of all its deployments.

"In today's economic climate, there is an even greater need for enterprises to lower their total cost of IT," said Nathan Day, Chief Technical Officer at SoftLayer. "But no one can afford to do that at the cost of power or stability. Our enterprise customers need a supported Linux platform that has been certified by all of the major software providers. SUSE Linux Enterprise Server provides unmatched reliability for mission-critical applications, as well as superior flexibility with built-in Xen virtualization."

With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, SoftLayer can now provide customers with a fully supported Linux-based server in a matter of hours. Customers can then manage their own environments, including the use of built-in Xen virtualization to allocate workloads and increase server utilization.

"We deliver Linux servers on-demand and in real-time, typically in about two hours," said George Karidis, Chief Strategy Officer at SoftLayer. "This is a huge difference from the 3–6 weeks it takes most internal IT teams to purchase, test and deploy a server in-house."

SoftLayer Technologies at a glance:

Provider of global, on-demand data center and hosting services

■ Industry:

IT Services

■ Location:

United States

■ Products and Services:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server with built-in Xen virtualization
Novell ZENworks Linux Management

■ Results:

- Expanded business to a new market segment of enterprise Linux customers
- Automated processes to provision new Linux servers in just two to four hours
- Dramatically reduced hardware and licensing costs for customers

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Chief Technical Officer
SoftLayer

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SoftLayer customers run a variety of workloads on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, including mission-critical business and ERP applications, Web servers, e-mail servers, storage and databases. Many are Web 2.0 customers where Web servers are the heart of their business. With three data centers throughout the U.S., SoftLayer can also provide customers with a reliable disaster recovery solution.

SoftLayer uses Novell ZENworks Linux Management to automate the provisioning of servers, so customers get a standard configuration each time. Novell ZENworks Linux Management also helps SoftLayer automate the delivery of new packages and patches from a remote location, as well generate real-time reports on the status of all customer servers.

“Novell ZENworks Linux Management makes it easy for us to offer server management capabilities to our customers,” said Day. “Customers simply log on to our portal and can select from a number of automated services for fast and convenient service. We automate everything for them so they can focus on what they do best, not on routine server maintenance.”

The automation of Novell ZENworks Linux Management frees up SoftLayer employees from a variety of manual processes and also helps the company deliver more consistent products and services to its customers. For example, the company has completely automated server registration, eliminating the need for human intervention.

SoftLayer can provide its customers with enterprise-level Linux environments on a

month-by-month basis, so customers avoid significant hardware investments and software licensing agreements.

“We have had a great experience working with Novell at all levels—sales, technology integration and support,” said Karidis. “Novell always met its commitments and deadlines. The whole process has been a pleasant change from our experience with other vendors.”

Results

For SoftLayer, adding SUSE Linux Enterprise Server to its portfolio of hosted platforms has opened a whole new market for enterprise Linux customers who want to outsource all or portions of their data center. In most cases, customers can move to a Linux-hosted solution for a fraction of the cost of implementing servers in-house. The built-in Xen virtualization in SUSE Linux Enterprise Server also allows customers to consolidate servers and further reduce costs.

By automating the provisioning of new servers with Novell ZENworks Linux Management, SoftLayer can deliver Linux servers to its customers in just two to four hours. Novell ZENworks Linux Management makes it easy to provide ongoing management to ensure its customer’s IT environments are always up-to-date and secure.

“Without Novell, we would miss out on a whole new customer segment as SUSE Linux Enterprise continues to gain market share,” said Karidis. “We’re committed to bringing our customers current and cost-effective solutions.”



Contact your local Novell Solutions Provider, or call Novell at:

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For More Information:

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