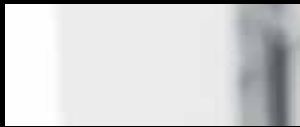


ADDRESSING ISSUES PROACTIVELY



SHODEN DATA SYSTEMS' ADVANCED SERVICES ENSURE THAT ITS CLIENTS' SERVER AND STORAGE ENVIRONMENTS ARE CONTINUALLY EXPERTLY MANAGED AND MAINTAINED.

WORDS **ILVA PIETERSE**

Shoden's Advanced Services assist clients in optimising storage and server resource utilisation with both its hardware and software products to obtain maximum value from their investments.

According to Stephanie Walker, manager of Advanced Services at Shoden Data Systems, many clients are battling with skills shortage efficiency issues. "Shoden offers access to skills, resources and experience that would not otherwise be available to many organisations because of the financial outlay that would be involved in building and retaining these specialised proficiencies in-house."

Advanced Services include Selective Sourcing, Specialised Services, Project Management, Remote Services, and a 24-hour service desk.

The aim of these value-added services is to help customers identify risks, plan the right storage architecture, optimise server and storage performance, and manage these environments cost-effectively.

Says Walker: "Our true value is when we manage and take full responsibility for the client's server and/or storage environments. However, we also provide additional resources to form part of our client's service teams where we provide continual guidance and recommendations to improve their server and storage environments. Because our expertise is so advanced in these areas, we know the best ways in which to make use of, and optimise, these environments."

Often, she says, when such environments are sold and implemented, clients will not use them to full potential due to a lack of resources, skills and time.

Shoden consultants offer expertise and proven methodologies to help organisations assess and improve their server and storage infrastructure.

METHODOLOGY

Shoden utilises its Service Management Methodology to map critical service elements to the client's unique business needs.

Each phase produces deliverables and an official sign-off before the next phase can begin.

Service strategy

This phase aims to understand the client's environment. It identifies where the client would like to be and what needs to be put in place to get there.

Service design

The main objective of this phase is to design the client's service solution and agree with the client on activities that will take place in preparation for the service delivery, the contract scope, service level agreements (SLAs) and service fees for the service to be provided.

Service transition

This phase aims to ready the environment, put in place the necessary resources, processes and procedures, and to migrate the specified services from the current service provider (internal or external) to Shoden, in preparation for the next phase, service operation.

Service operation

This phase continues for the life of the selective sourcing services contract. During this phase, Shoden will deliver the services as per the contract and according to the agreed service levels.

Continual service improvement

The main objective of this phase is to continually monitor and review all aspects of the services being provided by Shoden with a view to continually provide a more effective and efficient service to the client.

"We guarantee regular communication with our clients to ensure that our service is giving them true benefits," says Walker. "We conduct regular meetings in which we address problems. In this way, we can strive for continual improvement."

SELECTIVE SOURCING

Over the past couple of years, sourcing strategies have matured from single service provider to selective sourcing or multi-sourcing, where organisations seek to gain further competitive advantage through employing 'best-of-breed' service providers. The Selective Sourcing Service

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STEPHANIE WALKER

model is one of selective outsourcing, where a preferred partner manages certain applications and services driven by the client's desire to mitigate risk and realise increased reward.

Shoden's Selective Sourcing Services focuses on, and specialises in, its core business. The scope of this service is tailored to meet the client's particular requirements.

"Shoden's service offering is designed to help customers better manage their complex environments by developing, enhancing and deploying the critical processes required to effectively manage their environments. Shoden provides the skills, areas of expertise, processes, tools and methodologies needed to help optimise the management of the client's server and storage environments, thus improving the efficiency of the operation in terms of reliability, availability, serviceability and performance," says Walker.

SPECIALIST SERVICES

Shoden's Specialised Services complement server and storage hardware and software purchases and help get the utmost value from IT investment. These fixed-price, short-term engagements address specific requirements, providing timely, cost-effective assistance with infrastructure

architecture and design, implementations, assessments, analyses, and server and data storage operations upliftment.

REMOTE SERVICES

Walker explains that Shoden offers a remote monitoring and reporting service. The reporting service can provide detailed reporting on all aspects of a storage, virtual server and backup environment, including: backup reporting monitoring and reporting for the most popular backup solutions; SAN/NAS capacity reporting and monitoring from the storage array, to the host, down to the application; VMware capacity and performance reporting, monitoring, and alerting.

"Reporting is done based on a client's SLA. The client can determine how often they require reporting and what they would like the output to include," says Walker. "This removes the customers' pain point, allowing them to generate accurate reports regularly, assess the data and action the results."

The benefits of using this service are many. No investment in hardware is required, no administration is necessary from the client's side, value is instantaneous through the use of out-of-box reports and all levels of the organisation (from users to management) can make use of this service.

"Because we do proactive monitoring rather than reactive, clients will often not even realise they have an issue until after a member of Shoden's support team arrives to fix a problem," Walker says.

"Organisations are finding that their environments are getting increasingly complex, thereby making it more difficult to manage and support, and making it difficult to adapt to changing business conditions," says Walker. **E**

With the Shoden Advanced Services, the aim is to simplify and optimise clients' computing environments in order to:

- Reduce costs;
- Achieve business innovation initiatives;
- Improve service levels;
- Deploy new applications and technologies quickly and cost-effectively;
- Address compliance regulations;
- Manage business growth.