

GENCO SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS

Creating a Scalable Standard for Corporate Network Management with WhatsUp Gold

“WhatsUp Gold has everything GENCO needs to roll out our first corporate standard for scalable network management. It has the features we require today and for the future, priced affordably so that we aren’t paying for excess software, support or IT staffing. WhatsUp Gold was easy to use from the start. And it works.”

-KC Lau, Senior VP Systems, GENCO

BENEFITS OF THE WHATSUP GOLD SOLUTION

- » Corporate-wide consistency in network management
- » A scalable network solution to keep pace with GENCO’s growth
- » Proactive management of 150+ devices distributed among 80+ sites
- » Optimized uptime and bandwidth for GENCO users and their customers
- » Efficiency in IT staffing resources and costs

ABOUT GENCO

- » Global Top 50 third-party logistics company
- » Founded in 1898, privately held
- » Headquarters: Pittsburgh, PA
- » \$950 million annual sales
- » \$1.5 billion in freight managed annually
- » Over 37 million square feet of managed warehouse space

Founded in 1898 as a delivery company with a single horse and wagon, GENCO’s initial expansion took it into distribution, warehousing and product management. Later it grew to become a global leader of full-service supply chain solutions, with most of its customer base among Fortune 500 manufacturers and retailers.

Today GENCO offers an expanding array of services related to the supply chain in multiple industries. It continues to grow through strategic acquisitions.

One of GENCO’s key differentiators is technology leadership. The company offers a full suite of supply chain solutions for distribution, returns operations and transportation. GENCO and its customers rely on EDI transmission among trading partners to automate the entire supply chain.

KC Lau, Senior VP of Systems, has been with GENCO for 13 years, managing the challenges of rolling out technology in a distributed environment. He and his team were chartered with the task of identifying and rolling out a company-wide solution that would become GENCO’s first standard platform for network management.

In search of a corporate standard:

As Lau explains, “We already had network management tools. The problem was, they weren’t standardized across our 80+ locations. Also they weren’t proactive. They could report when there was a problem but they couldn’t predict problems so we could prevent them. There was no consistent corporate standard and no network-wide implementation.

“At the same time, because of our continued growth, often through strategic acquisitions, our network was growing and accommodating a variety of legacy systems. We never had a network management breakdown. But we realized it was time to get all of our servers and peripherals under one standard, scalable management system.”

At first Lau and his team evaluated enterprise-wide solutions. They also considered outsourcing. “Initially we thought an enterprise solution would work best. But then we saw that it was resource intensive. Not only were these solutions high-priced, they required extra dedicated staff and extensive training. Frankly, it was not cost effective for a company of our size.”

Outsourcing was rejected because GENCO wanted to have control over its network management system. “We want to implement and maintain it the way it will work best for our company.”

One of GENCO’s recently acquired divisions had been a user of Ipswitch, Inc.’s WhatsUp Gold.

According to Lau, “We downloaded a trial and liked it right away. It was intuitive. We also quickly saw that WhatsUp Gold could monitor what we need to monitor – it had what we needed without unnecessarily complicated features or excess cost.”

A distributed model for network management:

Currently GENCO is in the first phase of rolling out WhatsUp Gold throughout the corporation. The rollout began with corporate headquarters and one other site. Two additional sites are scheduled to be added, and in less than a year Lau expects WhatsUp Gold to be fully operational at GENCO’s 80+ sites.

Each site has one person responsible for the rollout. Corporate has only one team member responsible for implementation as well. “What’s ideal and cost-effective for us is that none of the staff involved in the rollout has to be dedicated,” comments Lau. “The rollout is just one part of their work responsibilities. We can do that because the software is easy to use and easy on staffing resources.”

So far the rollout has gone smoothly. “It’s rare for us to call tech support, because our questions are easily resolved by searching online. And so far all the comments from staff involved in the rollout are very positive,” Lau reports.

Looking ahead to proactive network management:

Lau and his team are looking forward to monitoring the entire network from a single management server. "Having an easy to manage and up-to-date networking system is important for GENCO's future," states Lau. "Especially because we can use WhatsUp Gold proactively."

For example, Lau anticipates monitoring disk drive and bandwidth thresholds so that his team can prevent problems. The ability to set and monitor thresholds is particularly important to GENCO because so many of its network users are also GENCO customers relying on EDI.

GENCO's reputation as a supply chain leader has always depended on close ties to customers and their trading partners. Today with appropriate monitoring tools, the company provides a 24x7 communications and transaction infrastructure, where uptime and bandwidth are critical to customer satisfaction.

Comments Lau, "I don't like to hear from customers that they couldn't get a file transmission because the network was down. WhatsUp Gold, used proactively, will help us prevent unexpected downtime across our entire network."

About The Network Management Division of Ipswitch, Inc.

The Network Management Division of Ipswitch, Inc. is the developer of the WhatsUp Gold suite of innovative IT Management software. Over 100,000 networks worldwide — in small, medium and enterprise businesses — use WhatsUp Gold to assure the availability, health and security of their critical business infrastructure. WhatsUp Gold was named Network Management Product of 2010 by Network Computing Magazine and earned the Network Products Guide 2010 Product Innovation Award in Network Management. To learn more about WhatsUp Gold or download a free trial, please visit: www.whatsupgold.com/products/download

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