

CASE STUDY

Fair Isaac: Gaining Advantage from Microsoft Software Assurance

Sponsored by: Microsoft

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COMPANY BACKGROUND

Fair Isaac Corporation (NYSE: FIC) provides decision management solutions that are powered by advanced analytics and used by banks and credit card issuers as well as insurers, retailers, telecommunications providers, healthcare organizations, and government agencies. Founded in 1956, Fair Isaac offers solutions to help customers make mission-critical business decisions that are more precise, consistent, and agile. Today, the company's solutions, software, and consulting services power more than 180 billion smarter business decisions each year for companies worldwide.

Microsoft Products and Solutions

Tom Grahek, director of IT at Fair Isaac, is responsible for server and workstation environments across 33 offices in 9 countries. This includes the management of approximately 3,000 personal computers and over 600 Microsoft-based servers.

The primary Microsoft products in use at Fair Isaac include:

- Microsoft Office
- Windows Server 2003/AD
- SQL Server 2000
- BizTalk Server 2004
- Exchange Server 2003
- Microsoft.NET

Fair Isaac acquired these products via Microsoft volume licensing, with all products purchased under a full-platform Enterprise Agreement.

Microsoft Software Assurance Purchase and Benefits

Microsoft Software Assurance (SA) appealed to Grahek in part because the offering could provide enhanced cost predictability and increased ease of administration. With SA, Fair Isaac can have a consistent budget year to year and assign an accurate cost per desktop as almost every desktop has a similar software profile.

"Without SA upgrade rights, version compatibility can be a challenge," said Grahek. "With SA, we have very little if any compatibility issues. Especially on the desktop, having one standard image saves time by not having to keep track of disparate inventories and do incremental purchases and deployment."

Fair Isaac also takes advantage of the employee training and elearning services provided under SA. And, since all Microsoft training has been covered under Fair Isaac's SA benefits, the company has been able to reduce its overall training costs.

Home use rights have also been a great benefit for Fair Isaac by helping to increase employee satisfaction, boost productivity, reduce IT burden, and reduce costs. In only the first year of promoting home use rights, over 10% of employees took advantage of this benefit, saving Fair Isaac over \$120,000 in software licensing costs.

Another way in which SA helps Fair Isaac save money is through Microsoft TechNet Plus and Problem Resolution Support, which gives Fair Isaac's IT staff access to news groups, allows them a couple of technical support incidents per year, and provides full use rights for license evaluation purposes. As a result of these services, Fair Isaac has been able to reduce the amount of money it spends on its Microsoft premier support contract.

In addition, SA helps Fair Isaac deploy licenses with ease and train staff when the company makes acquisitions.

"We replatform with our standard and use tools to retrain in case the employee is not familiar with the software," said Grahek. If the acquisition is less than 10% of overall company size, Grahek and his team deploy standard Microsoft software and then go through a true-up at the annual anniversary of their enterprise agreement. "In the last 12 months, we've gone through two acquisitions, and both have been seamless in terms of licensing deployment."

CONCLUSION

While Grahek would not describe Fair Isaac as being on the bleeding edge of deploying new technology, the company is on the leading edge, and Grahek believes that this enhances the company's ability to take advantage of many of the SA benefits. Fair Isaac has modern PCs and internally developed software distribution systems in place, which enables the company to deploy version upgrades as they become available.

Future SA enhancements that Grahek would like to see include more flexible problem resolution support such as an increased number of support IDs, incidences, and training vouchers.

Grahek notes that Microsoft has been adding value to SA over time.

"With the growing amount of benefits, you need to be a good consumer and determine how to take advantage of all of them," Grahek said.

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