IT service provider improves service quality with Checkmk

THE CLIENT

Company: Siedl Networks GmbH

Location: Krems an der Donau, Austria

Website: www.siedl.net

Siedl Networks, an IT service provider based in Austria, specializes in open source and Linux-based solutions in the fields of virtualization, IT infrastructure, email, groupware and IT monitoring. The technology company provides IT services for private companies, public institutions and non-profit organizations.

KEY POINTS

In 2019, Siedl Networks switched to the Checkmk Managed Services Edition, because the company needed to replace Icinga. Among other benefits, this makes managing monitoring sites of customers much easier.

Based on the Checkmk Managed Services Edition, Siedl Networks developed its own product, the Checkmk Watchbox and offers its customers a flexible monitoring service. The Checkmk Watchbox allows the implementation of Checkmk in any customer environment in just a few minutes.

Thanks to comprehensive reporting mechanisms, informative dashboards and precise notifications, the support team can optimally adapt their service to individual customer requirements.

THE FOCUS IS ALWAYS ON THE CUSTOMER

As expert in open source solutions and Linux software, Siedl Networks provides comprehensive IT services to customers all over Austria. The ability to monitor any kind of IT system is essential for the IT service provider in two respects: On the one hand, as a managed service offering for customers who do not want to operate their own monitoring system, and on the other hand, as a way to ensure the quality of other IT services provided by Siedl Networks. Both variants require flexible monitoring that can cope with a wide variety of systems.

Siedl Networks already decided some years ago to offer a managed service for IT monitoring. The administration of this managed monitoring offering, however, proved to be extremely time-consuming due to the monitoring solution that was previously used. In their search for an open source alternative, the support team looked into Checkmk. After a successful tess, Siedl Networks finally switched from Icinga to the Checkmk Enterprise Managed Services Edition in 2019, raising the quality of its monitoring to a new level.

Figure 1: Siedl Networks helps its customers with Checkmk

The support team always monitors systems that are part of another Siedl Networks managed service. In addition, customers can decide which additional systems Siedl Networks should also monitor. Checkmk then automatically notifies customers when they have a problem. Thanks to the precise notifications, the in-depth information on the status of the network, that of the systems as well as the individual processes, Checkmk assists Siedl Networks in taking the right measures quickly and avoiding outages.

THE CHALLENGE

As an IT service provider, Siedl Networks needs a flexible monitoring tool that monitors a variety of systems according to customer requirements and at the same time enables distributed monitoring. This means that the individual end customers' monitoring data must converge in a central monitoring site located, but the access to the data must be strictly limited. Customer information may only be viewed after an appropriate security release.

On request, Siedl Networks provides its clients with individual dashboards for their respective monitoring environments. In addition, they provide regular reports and analysis based on the respective monitoring data to identify trends or analyze incidents, for example. This also helps Siedl Networks and its customers in defining priorities for the further development of the IT infrastructure of the customer. For Siedl Networks, such partnerships as equals are very important. This is why Checkmk's reporting functions deliver great added value and allow appropriate reports to be created with little effort.

> *Checkmk helps us to present each customer with the best options for expanding or adapting their IT environment.*
>
> **Robert Siedl**, Founder and CEO at Siedl Networks

MONITORING FOR IT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Siedl Networks installs its Checkmk Watchbox at each of its customers' premises. This is a low-energy hardware appliance on which Checkmk is pre-installed. Once implemented, Siedl Networks integrates the appliance as a Checmk remote site into its distributed monitoring. Setting up monitoring at the customer's site thus takes only a few minutes. The administration is then carried out remotely by the central Checkmk site at Siedl Networks headquarters.
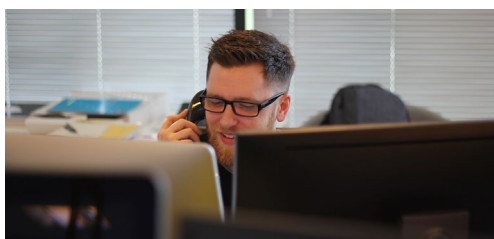

Figure 2: With Checkmk, problems are detected immediately

Monitoring not only enables Siedl Networks to identify which hardware resources are running at their capacity limit, but also to ensure the optimal performance of its other managed services. This benefits not only the customers, but also the support team itself, as it is able to respond promptly to potential incidents.

THE SOLUTION

Siedl Networks has been using the Checkmk Enterprise Managed Services Edition since 2019. The migration from the previous solution to Checkmk was easily achieved through the use of the livestatus protocol. Siedl Networks operates a central Checkmk site at its corporate headquarters, as well as a number of Checkmk remote sites. All remote sites are set up in the customer's IT environment as a Checkmk Watchbox – a preconfigured hardware appliance from Siedl Networks.

The notifications and the various dashboards help the support team to quickly identify potential problems. Thanks to Checkmk, Siedl Networks is able to eliminate most issues before they impact the customer's user experience. This is also helped by a large screen in the office that provides a global view of all of the customers' monitored systems. In this way, the support team can always keep an eye on the status of monitoring at customers' sites.

Figure 3: A screen showing a global overview of all systems

> *Nothing is impossible thanks to Checkmk. We can always deliver, what the customer asks for: Detailed real-time metrics for IT veterans in enterprises or an all-inclusive package for smaller companies.*
>
> **Robert Siedl**, Founder and CEO at Siedl Networks

The Checkmk Enterprise Managed Services Edition is multi-tenant, eliminating the need to share customer data between remote sites. It also allows customers to access dashboards in their own monitoring environment while ensuring the highest possible level of monitoring security.

An additional benefit is the minimal effort required for customizing the monitoring. For example, Siedl Networks can automatically roll out monitoring agents. Checkmk's Agent Bakery additionally provides a feature for automatically deploying custom agents and configuration updates to specific host groups. In addition, with over 2,000 monitoring plug-ins, Checkmk is able to monitor a wide range of systems out of the box. This allows Siedl Networks to meet most customer requirements without any additional effort.

THE ADVANTAGES

Siedl Networks can centrally manage each customer Checkmk site and can thus provide the monitoring as a complete service. The effort for the IT team has been significantly reduced by using Checkmk. The simple installation and the capability of monitoring a large number of different systems with little effort, combined with Checkmk's transparent licensing system, form the optimal basis for the IT service provider.

Siedl Networks has already written its own monitoring extensions for special customer requirements. For one customer, for example, Checkmk monitors the temperature of the server room and ensures that the servers are automatically shut down in the event of a critical heat buildup. As well as the monitoring extension, the support team has written an additional script that triggers a server shutdown when necessary.

> *Checkmk has significantly reduced our workload. Not only the distributed monitoring, but also other well-designed features make Checkmk an ideal tool for IT service providers.*

Robert Siedl, Founder and CEO at Siedl Networks

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