



Case Study

Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor
with vPro™ Technology
Predictive Enterprise
Security & Manageability



PC Maintenance Goes Remote

Microblue moved to Intel® vPro™ technology, and reaps the benefits of remote PC management, security and stability

Desktop PCs are the mainstay for many companies to get the daily jobs done. Easily available and inexpensive to set up, many companies may not realize that the costs of operating their office PCs can quickly and easily outweigh their initial capital investment. Support, maintenance and repair costs increase every year, as Microblue Sdn Bhd, a Malaysian trading business discovered. Added to that, staff productivity levels drop as PC downtime increase due to aging machines and 'reactive' rather than 'proactive' maintenance. Rather than tackle the issue by buying new PCs and hiring their own in-house technician, Microblue did the smart thing—the company invested in Intel® vPro™ technology when refreshing their desktop PC fleet.

“PC troubleshooting takes up a lot of time and cost. With Intel® vPro™ technology, we can eliminate these problems and maximize productivity.”

Cheah Thean Soo
Managing Director, Microblue

Challenges

- **Increase business productivity.** Existing desktop PCs were aging and suffer from frequent downtime, affecting staff productivity and work efficiencies.
- **Reduce operating costs of PC fleet.** Company has no in-house technician, and frequent support visits, repairs and maintenance were increasing operating costs for Microblue.

Solutions

- **Deploy Intel® vPro™ technology.** Platform refresh with desktops based on the Intel® Core™2 Duo processor with Intel® vPro™ technology.

Impact

- **Productivity increased.** Up to 90 percent increase in staff productivity due to more reliable PCs and reduced downtime
- **Better manageability.** Enhanced control and management of PCs from vendor, through LAN and VPN.
- **Enhanced security.** Automated and proactive security updates and anti-virus patches increased Microblue's PCs and network from outside threats.

Aging PCs hamper operational efficiency

Microblue Sdn Bhd has built a successful trading company for over ten years. With just 25 employees, the company has a business turnover of MYR 12 million. Working lean and smart is typical of many Malaysian companies like Microblue. Like many others, the company depends on its desktop PCs for its daily operations.

Microblue maintains a large database of its clients on its PCs. This contains customer purchase orders, invoices, and other pertinent customer details. The PCs are used mainly by the company's sales team, accounting, and administration teams to generate quotations, invoicing, maintaining price lists, and handling aging payables and receivables reports. These work are very important to Microblue in maintaining the operational viability of the company, ensuring that work and cash flows are accurate and deadlines are met.

With the desktop PCs more than three years old, Microblue was experiencing increasing problems that hamper its daily operations. These were due to a variety of issues. “Our PCs were not performing at 100 percent efficiency and this was causing PC downtime which resulted in reducing staff productivity,” said Microblue's managing director, Cheah Thean Soo.

This typically ends up with staff having to work overtime. “Sometimes, I have to ask my staff to stay back because the database gets corrupted,” he added, “to re-do invoicing and other work in order to meet our deadlines. My workers were frustrated with the PCs, and my operating costs increased as I have to cater to overtime claims.” And these were not the only costs incurred by Microblue.

Sending problem PCs to the repair shop or calling for desk-side visits added to the costs. Some of the PCs were also running very old operating systems that were not compatible with the latest anti-virus and anti-spyware programs and updates. Virus and spyware attacks were becoming a common occurrence. Cheah had to resort to disabling or disconnecting those PCs from the network and the Internet, but this was not a suitable or efficient solution. Microblue did not have any in-house PC technician and relied on an IT vendor to provide support. But the PC problems were increasingly affecting staff productivity and business finances unpredictably to the point that Cheah decided to look for a better solution.

Taking steps towards Intel® vPro™ technology

That solution turned out to be Intel® vPro™ technology. Through Intel and SNS Network Sdn Bhd, a local systems integration company, Cheah was convinced it was the right way to go. "I was attracted by better computing power, automatic and proactive alerts, remote power up and power cycling for PCs to perform scheduled maintenance and backup," said Cheah. These were just some of the features of Intel® vPro™ technology that can enable a company to manage its PC infrastructure more effectively, cutting PC downtime and maintenance costs.

Cheah originally considered employing a full-time technician to support his current old systems. But after consulting with Intel and SNS Network, Microblue decided that a phased desktop refresh to PCs with Intel® vPro™ technology would better ease his burden on the PC support issues. Microblue's decision rested on the benefits the technology would bring such as the projected increase in productivity and remote management, among others. The money Microblue would have spent on hiring a full-time technician was better used to invest in a more reliable and cost-saving PC infrastructure.

Working with SNS Network, Microblue made the transition with its first batch of nine desktop PCs running Intel® Core™2 Duo processors with Intel® vPro™ technology. This was later increased to a total of 22 PCs over a period of three months. All the PCs were also installed with the latest anti-virus software. SNS Network also upgraded the company's network cabling to ensure that the LAN was up to specifications and to avoid networking problems.

Through this setup, SNS Network provides support from a central console outside of Microblue's office premises via a secure VPN. From there, Microblue's PCs can be managed remotely. If a PC experiences any impending problem, the console is alerted automatically and an experienced technician can remotely access the failing PC to fix the problem. This speeds up support issues and reduces downtime. The central console can also ensure that Microblue's PCs are powered down outside of office hours to save on electricity costs. Furthermore, the system pro-actively manages security updates of anti-virus and anti-spyware definitions without interrupting staff access to the PCs.

Visible results

The results of the new deployment were readily apparent right from the start. "We were able to perform daily tasks faster," says Cheah, referring to the speedy performance of the Intel® Core™2 Duo processor-based PCs. The benefits Microblue gained can be summarized along three fronts:

1. Smart spending

1. Investing now to refresh 22 PCs with Intel® vPro™ technology-enabled PCs puts a cap on the increasing costs of supporting Microblue's old PCs, which Cheah estimated was rising at 50 percent annually.
2. Desk-side support visits have reduced by 70 percent, and energy savings gained by automatically powering off PCs are estimated at 5 percent.

2. Do More

1. 80 percent faster improvement in discovering and fixing PC problems.
2. Travel time for to manage PC problems reduced by 90 percent as most issues can be handled remotely.
3. End-user productivity increased 90 percent with lesser PC downtime and interruptions to work.

3. Be more secure

1. PC hardware and software inventory is now done automatically through the central console, improving accuracy and saving time and effort.
2. 90 percent faster to apply software patches, update anti-virus and anti-spyware definitions; previously these were done manually on each PC.
3. PCs and network traffic are automatically inspected, ensuring a secure work environment for Microblue.

The technology refresh exercise provided Microblue with the results Cheah was looking for. The company gained a secure, high-performance PC platform with remote management capabilities that increase productivity and reduce operational costs. When weighed against the options of hiring a full-time in-house technician and the growing cost of maintaining aging PCs, Cheah figures that this is money well-spent. Microblue can concentrate on the core trading business instead of worrying about IT problems in its workplace.

Spotlight on Microblue Sdn. Bhd.

- Microblue Sdn. Bhd. Located in the West Malaysian state of Penang, has been operating a trading business for more than ten years.
- With a staff of 25 and an annual turnover around MYR 12 million, Microblue is a successful company with a huge client database.



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