



Case Study

ICE Consulting improves service quality with Checkmk

THE CLIENT

Company: ICE Consulting

Size: 90 employees




Location: Milpitas, CA, USA

Website: www.iceconsulting.com



ICE Consulting is a leading managed IT solution provider which for over 24 years has specialized in the provision of vendor-independent managed IT services to small and medium-sized enterprises. The company provides 24x7x365 security detection. To ensure the high quality of its services, ICE Consulting was looking for a modern monitoring tool that meets the needs of an IT service provider.

KEY POINTS

-  ICE Consulting has been using the Checkmk Raw Edition for a number of years. In 2021 the IT service provider switched to the Checkmk Enterprise Managed Services Edition, because this edition's reporting features save the IT engineers a lot of time.
-  The IT team runs a distributed monitoring setup and has remote sites in the IT environments of 12 customers. The engineers use the monitoring to find issues within the customers' IT infrastructure and to ensure that service level agreements are met.
-  ICE Consulting currently monitors more than 12,000 services. Most monitored systems are servers running on Linux and Windows and network devices, but cloud systems and applications are also a part of the monitoring.

ENSURING RELIABILITY AS A TRUSTED SERVICE PROVIDER

Information technology is becoming more complex by the day. From new software, IT uptime and security, dispersed workforce, backup and redundancy, mobility trends with data centers and cloud technology, to security requirements, IT complexity can't be overstated. ICE Consulting aims to ease the burden in these areas and has specialized in providing complete, outsourced, managed IT services primarily focused on small-to-medium-sized businesses and biotech and life sciences firms. Over the last two decades, more than 1,000 customers worked together with ICE Consulting, mostly from California and Texas.

ICE Consulting started using Checkmk in 2013, as the company needed a tool that supports distributed monitoring. The IT team decided to use Checkmk, because it is easy to set up, provides a great graphical user interface and powerful dashboards. After several years working with the Checkmk Raw Edition, the leadership team decided to switch to the Checkmk Enterprise Managed Services Edition in 2021. The most important reason was the improved reporting. Before the change, engineers regularly created reports manually by taking screenshots of dashboards. These reports can now be created automatically.

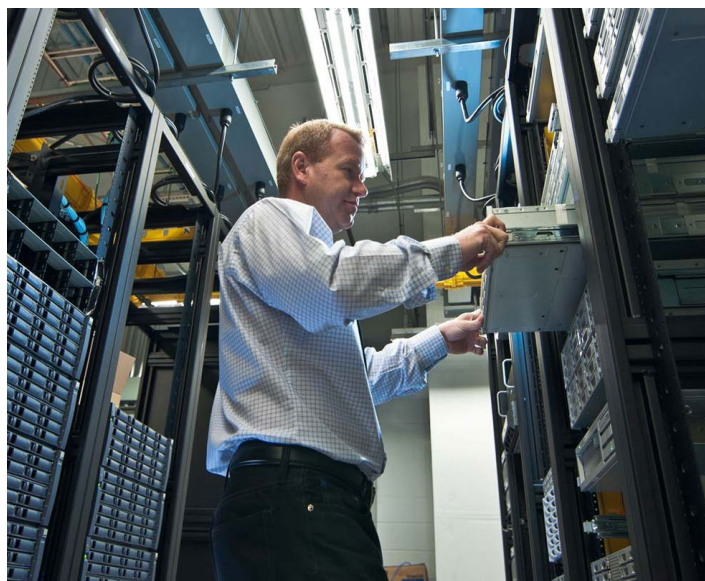


Figure 1: Customers value the expertise of ICE Consulting



By switching to the Checkmk Managed Services Enterprise Edition, we have been able to significantly reduce our IT team's workload.

THE CHALLENGE

ICE Consulting needed a monitoring tool that can be deployed quickly in a customer's environment and which supports remote management. In addition, it must be able to deal with a large variety of assets. The monitoring also has to be extremely reliable, since the monitoring data is vital for meeting service level agreements and for detecting infrastructure problems before these can turn into major issues for the customer.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION FOR ALL CUSTOMER SITES

ICE Consulting currently runs 13 Checkmk sites in a distributed monitoring setup, consisting of one central site in its own environment, and 12 remote sites in environments of its customers. Most remote sites monitor between 300 and 400 hosts, but the exact requirements and number of monitored systems depend on the individual customer. In total, the IT team monitors more than 12,000 services. For the IT team, it is also important that the monitoring can deal with any system that a customer wants to have monitored.

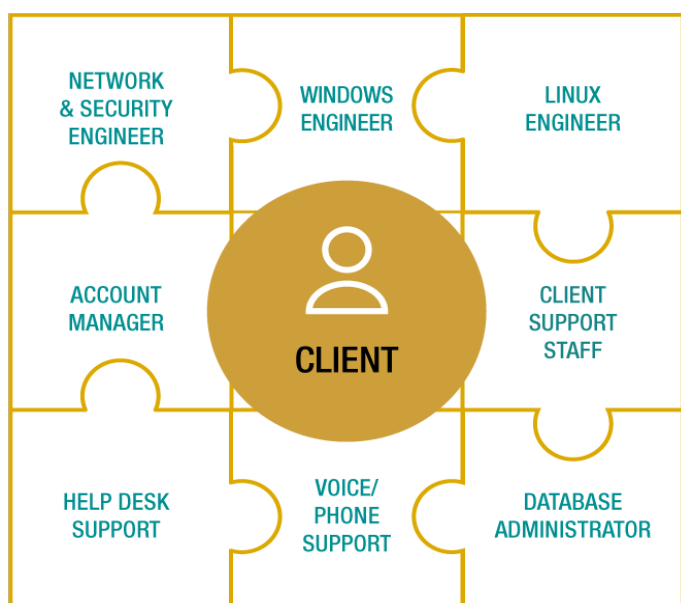


Figure 2: ICE has a wide network of experts

The monitoring with Checkmk is not limited to servers and network devices, ICE Consulting is also monitoring cloud and containers, for example. Checkmk provides around 2,000 official plug-ins. These ensure that most systems can be monitored out of the box with detailed insights. If a customer ICE Consulting wants to have a certain system monitored or wishes to focus on a single aspect of a system in detail, the responsible engineer can fulfill that wish in most cases, even without having prior experience in the particular area.



Checkmk is a game-changer for us. Even without prior monitoring experience, it is easy to use.

Marcelo Carvalho, Sr. Linux AWS Systems Engineer at ICE Consulting

THE SOLUTION

After using the Checkmk Raw Edition for several years, ICE Consulting switched to the Checkmk Managed Services Edition. The Checkmk Managed Services Edition provides several features that help managed service providers to work more efficiently. Most important for ICE Consulting is the ability to create standardized reports that can be shared with other teams and improve the service quality for the customers. Also, with just one central monitoring site, the IT team can control all remote sites in customer environments.

THE MONITORING AN IT SERVICE PROVIDER NEEDS

ICE Consulting does not provide a dedicated monitoring-as-a-service offering, Checkmk is a part of various IT service packages from ICE Consulting. Even though the customers are not paying for a dedicated monitoring service, the IT team provides them with access to some monitoring data and helps them in creating their own dashboards, so they can gain insights into their environments. This is highly appreciated by the customers.



Checkmk helps us to provide better services to our customers. We can detect issues faster and spend more time on quality work.

Marcelo Carvalho, Sr. Linux AWS Systems Engineer at ICE Consulting

The IT team manages the access to the monitoring and the various reports with different Checkmk user groups. This helps employees from ICE Consulting to create individual reports with a single click, even if they don't have experience with Checkmk. While the standardized reports created by the engineers are only used internally, ICE Consulting also creates reports for the customers on request – for example, overviews for leadership teams.

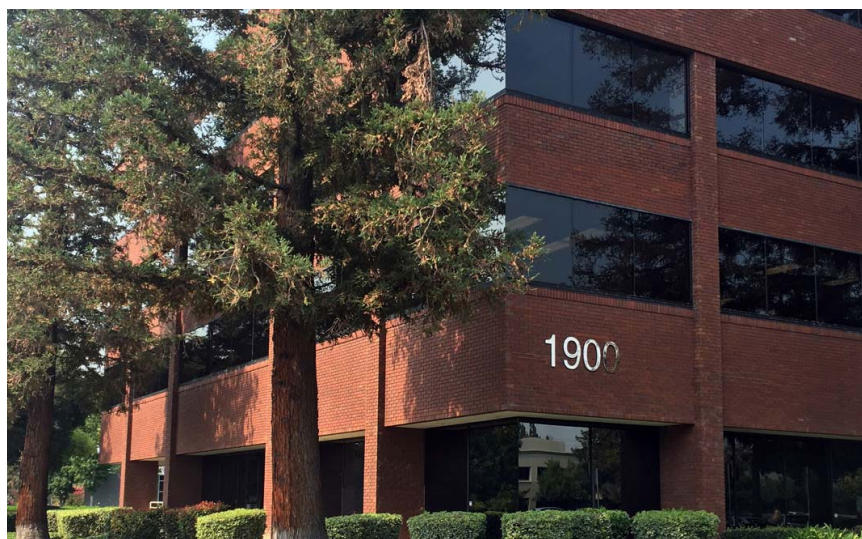


Figure 3: Most customers of ICE Consulting are located near its headquarters in Silicon Valley

THE ADVANTAGES

With the Checkmk Managed Services Edition, ICE Consulting is able to manage all of its customers' systems in a single, centrally-managed, distributed monitoring setup. The monitoring is easy to manage. For example, the migration from Checkmk Raw to Checkmk Enterprise went smoothly and took just a few days. The insights gained from the monitoring data are not only creating transparency for ICE Consulting, but also help the different teams within ICE Consulting to improve their service quality.

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