PRTG Network Monitor Helps Small, Family-Owned IT Consulting Business Provide World-Class Reliability

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Daniel Covell, President, The Covell Group

One of the specialties of The Covell Group is server and website monitoring, which requires a great degree of versatility. "We find it's important to partition customers on our network of servers so they can have separate access if they wish, along with individualized reporting," Daniel explained. "No matter what mix of IT they use or services they require, each of our customers needs to feel as if they are our most important client."

Within a few years of its founding, The Covell Group realized that the monitoring platform it used to oversee these networks was becoming both expensive and difficult to operate. In order to maintain the level of personalization, network dependability and exceptional customer service expected of a boutique consulting firm, The Covell Group sought a better alternative.

Fast, reliable and insightful information

For firms with limited manpower resources like The Covell Group, well-designed IT tools are the foundation of high level service—particularly because lesser quality products require the kind of hands-on adjustment and maintenance that smaller firms simply can't afford.

Daniel Covell had this demanding standard in mind when he searched for a top-quality, professional monitoring solution. He eventually discovered the free version of PRTG Network Monitor and decided to give it a try. "I really liked the easy setup as well as the easy-to-use Web interface of PRTG," he recalled. "In 2007 I purchased the commercial version—and I've been using it ever since."

The Covell Group is responsible for a mixed IT infrastructure of internal and external servers. Because it also sells monitoring services to its customers, fast, reliable and insightful status information is critical. Daniel finds that PRTG Network Monitor satisfies on all counts.

"Most systems I monitor are Windows-based, along with a few Linux systems and a number of websites. Overall I use 409 sensors and 14 remote probes that track CPU, disk space, and Windows services. I also collect bandwidth information for over 20 firewalls and a combination of Cisco and Zyxel routers," he stated, adding that his firm uses PRTG's SOAP sensors to monitor servers and VMware for a close treatment of virtualized environments.

Daniel emphasized the versatility PRTG Network Monitor provides by supporting such a wide sensor range. "The most important feature to me is the ability to install so many types of sensors with little or no customization or setup," he states. "I even monitor a few pieces of hardware, such as a freezer probe for our customer, Moradi M.D. As a research-focused cosmetic surgery clinic, Moradi M.D. owns a freezer in which it stores human tissue as well as temperature-sensitive chemicals worth thousands of dollars. If the interior temperature of the unit rises above 32° Fahrenheit, PRTG instantly pages the appropriate individuals."

PRTG NETWORK MONITOR

"Makes me look like the hero"

For the monitoring services it sells and for the internal monitoring it does of both customer- and company-owned systems, The Covell Group relies heavily on PRTG Network Monitor, 24/7/365. Daniel has been impressed with the speed and accuracy of the software.

"The biggest benefit, both for my company and my customers, is that I know in minutes when things are wrong—sometimes before they know. This makes me look like the hero swooping in to save the day quickly!" he said. "I even use the bandwidth monitoring, and the monitoring of PDUs, to bill customers on usage."

Daniel can recount many cases where PRTG Network Monitor quickly exposed an issue—often allowing him to correct the problem before it compromised service. "PRTG has helped countless times. Once it caught a domain name that expired over a weekend—it was fixed before work on Monday morning, whereas it would otherwise have caused the customer to not have email for at least half a day," he noted. "PRTG also allowed me to fix issues like a T1 line down or afterhours power outage, so that everything is working by the time the next workday started. The list goes on and on."

Importantly, PRTG has also allowed The Covell Group to increase business by identifying opportunities for system improvements. "Our monitoring platform allows me to see where there are pipeline weaknesses requiring better bandwidth, where there is high latency, or where a virtual environment requires more servers," Daniel said.

Because he is often on the road with customers, Daniel finds that PRTG Network Monitor's new Android app is a convenient alternative to the Web interface he typically uses. As with PRTG's Web dashboard, the Android app displays all sensor readouts hierarchically and in real time, by probes, groups and devices. The app also allows Daniel to place widgets on his smartphone's home screen that display performance for specific sensors, or groups of sensors, in "speedometer" fashion, without having to open the app.

Essential business role

Today, PRTG Network Monitor plays an essential role in The Covell Group's business model. Reliability is important—not only for the services the company itself offers, but also for the many services it maintains on behalf of its customers.

"I have used several other monitoring products over my career. None, in my opinion, are close to PRTG," states Daniel. "I recommend PRTG Network Monitor to people all the time—and even shown existing PRTG users how to use features they didn't know existed. The biggest benefit from PRTG is that I can catch things quickly, in many cases before my customers know. This adds value to my services and keeps everyone happy."

ABOUT COVELL GROUP

The Covell Group Inc. is proud to call itself "family-owned." Based in San Diego, the firm has thrived since 2002 by providing a level of individualized service that is truly rare in the often impersonal and bureaucratic IT consulting and outsourcing industries.

The Covell Group is serving a customer base of small (1-20 employee) and medium (20-500 employee) companies, along with residential and SOHO users. Founder/President Daniel Covell and his wife, Dana Covell, who serves as Vice President of Customer Relations, are both expert professionals. Daniel entered system design and support in 1995, and Dana, a data specialist, holds a Masters in Information Science.

The Covell Group's menu of services span the full spectrum of business and residential needs, from system design and implementation consulting to training, maintenance, repair, offsite data protection and systems monitoring. The Covell Group's niche is SMBs, so it's essential that the company provides the level of service required by fast-moving, growing enterprises.

ABOUT PAESSLER AG

Paessler AG leads the industry in providing the most powerful, affordable and easy-to-use network monitoring and testing solutions. The company's suite of just-right software products deliver peace of mind, confidence and convenience for businesses of all sizes – from Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) to large enterprises, including more than 70% of the Fortune 100 companies. Based in Nuremberg, Germany, Paessler's global reach includes more than 150,000 active installations of its products. Founded in 1997, Paessler AG remains a privately held company and is recognized as both a member of the Cisco Developer Network and a VMware Technology Alliance Partner.

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