

**VICTORY
@ VITRIA**



At Vitria, an integration server provider, TAOS consultant Larry LaBas was initially charged with performing a "sanity check" on the company's backup systems, implementing a VPN, and fixing their Windows NT network.

In the latter case, users attempting to log in remotely to the Outlook Web Access and MS Point-to-Point Tunneling servers repeatedly encountered "incorrect password" messages, thus bombarding Vitria's helpdesk with phone calls. The problem, which had gone unsolved for several months even after the purchase of direct support from Microsoft, was buried deep within the server itself.

"The original configuration of their systems used the primary domain controller (PDC) as a print and file server," Larry says. "During a domain analysis, I realized that the remote procedure call (RPC) connections were extremely slow going to and from the PDC."

After bringing a dedicated PDC online that performed only domain functions and not other services, RPC communications between the servers returned to normal, "and the helpdesk authentication support requests dropped to what one would normally expect from users," Larry says. This substantially reduced this department's workload, allowing them to focus on other projects such as crosstraining with other departments and updating antivirus software. "I would estimate that the number of calls related to authentication issues went from eight to 12 per week down to one a week," Larry adds.

During the course of his assignment with Vitria, Larry also discovered that the company was not employing uninterruptable power supply (UPS) for its servers and network appliance. Although power backups are always a safe bet, the threat of rolling blackouts in the California power crisis made such a feature essential. After purchasing and installing \$15,000 in serial cables and UPS devices, Larry has potentially saved Vitria as much as 540 man-hours, as servers brought offline due to a backup must be rebuilt, a task that typically takes 20 hours per server.

As an additional option, these servers can now be powered on and off manually via a web interface, again saving many man-hours for those who would otherwise have to physically come in and power off a server that suddenly locked up.

About two weeks after the UPS solution was implemented, a stage 3 power alert at the company's Sunnyvale offices translated into a real-life test of the systems. Scott McEvoy, Director of IT, describes what happened: "We had been discussing the recent rolling blackouts in our staff meeting and all agreed that it was very likely that we would suffer a loss of power within the next 24 hours. A few minutes later, the lights went out. We all looked at each other with those faint smiles that you use when a dentist tells you that you might feel a little pain and headed to the server room.

"By the time we got there, about 25 percent of our servers had already started a controlled shutdown. The remaining servers were brought down gracefully and all were shut down well within the time frame allotted by our UPS systems. When the power came back up two hours later, all of the servers came back online without a single failure.

"The power distribution units and UPS systems proposed and implemented by Larry LaBas turned what could have been a very, very long night into nothing more than a couple of hours in the dark."

