Safe Systems, Inc.

Focusing on community banks, Safe Systems, Inc. is one of the fastest growing network integration companies in the U.S.

Kaseya Enables Rapid Business Growth for Ambitious MSP

Long a proponent of extending its reach beyond the Southeast, the management team at Safe Systems—a network integration business based in Atlanta that focuses on community banks—set a goal in 2005 to grow its customer base by 25 percent per year for the next four years and transform the company into a national player. A lofty goal of 15,000 clients managed across the US was set, five times the current 3,000 systems that the company's administrators monitored and maintained.

In order to meet this aggressive goal, Safe Systems decided to migrate from a traditional break-fix services company to a more efficient managed services business model, providing basic monitoring and maintenance services for a fixed price. However, in order to accomplish this, the company needed to quickly scale its IT management solution—the main business tool its technical engineers, IT administrators and support staff used to help financial institutions select and implement network and Internet technology solutions.

The company's existing appliance-based solution was already entrenched with the network engineers and, according to Curt Frierson, executive vice president of technology and education for Safe Systems, enabled remote systems management of distributed customer systems. However, once the company tried to scale the solution past 3,000 clients—well short of the ultimate goal of 15,000 systems—the software started to break down, slowing to a crawl or completely crashing at the most inopportune times.

"We tried to address the scalability issues with the support team, but their solution every time was to just keep adding appliances," Frierson said. "It got to the point where we had four devices and it still couldn't support the growth we needed."

The vendor then introduced Safe Systems to a new hosted version of its remote monitoring solution, hoping that a network-based approach would solve the scalability issues. However, the new solution continued to resist efforts to scale past 3,000 clients—a serious liability for a managed service provider that wants to grow quickly and regionally while maintaining a central service delivery model.

In addition, the solution's pricing model was inconsistent, changing multiple times as Safe Systems bought more licenses. Because the company was growing at a fast rate, the accountants never knew how much they would be billed month to month, preventing them from budgeting accurately. The inconsistencies were then passed on to Safe Systems' customers who were in turn just as confused—making it hard to sell the flat monthly fee that is the hallmark of the MSP model.

"After several months of trying to engineer a solution and working through the inconsistencies we realized that the solution just wasn't ready for production," Frierson said. "The wheels had clearly fallen off and we needed to investigate other options."

Scalability through the Kaseya IT Automation Platform

After investigating software from Dell, N-Able and Level Platforms, Safe Systems deployed a remote and automated managed services solution from Kaseya that gives its administrators complete access and visibility into its customers' IT environments from a central Web-based console—regardless of the location of each system. Now, the company's network engineers are able to seamlessly scale its managed services quickly and efficiently across the country, remotely installing agents that automatically monitor and manage thousands of customer systems—from servers to desktops and laptops—from the company's Network Operations Center (NOC).

According to Frierson, installation of the Kaseya managed services provider edition was easy, enabling the company to implement a pragmatic migration strategy that allowed existing break-fix customers and new customers from around the country to move to the MSP model in a phased roll-out. As a result, the company has been able to meet its aggressive growth goals, monitoring and managing more than 6,000 clients across the country in less than six months after purchasing Kaseya.

Website: www.safesystems.com

Business Challenge:
Expanding from a regional network integrator to a managed services provider (MSP) with national reach, Safe Systems needed to scale its IT services to support thousands of clients over a large distributed area. The company's existing systems management solution did not scale past several hundred clients—basic functions suffered from chronic slow-down or failure once a threshold was reached. With a goal of 15,000 clients by 2009, the software severely limited the company's range and prevented it from expanding much past its Southeastern roots.

Solution:
Safe Systems deployed a remote and automated managed services solution from Kaseya that gives its administrators complete access and visibility into its customers' IT environments from a web-based console, allowing small centralized teams to monitor and manage a large number of distributed systems. Now, the company has a reliable and robust IT management platform that it can scale quickly and seamlessly in an effort to service a larger customer base—one that exceeds 6,000 devices across the U.S.

www.kaseya.com

"We can now scale our services much more easily with Kaseya, helping us migrate customers over to the new service delivery model as they come up for contract renewal with minimal interruption to day-to-day operations or customer service," Frierson said. "We're nearly half-way to our goal, and we haven't even used 50 percent of available resources. The solution is showing no signs of performance degradation, and it's working smoothly like it should."

As part of its assessment services for new customers, Safe Systems used to send two engineers on-site—often flying them from Atlanta—to evaluate the network and make recommendations based on growth trends, current inefficiencies and business goals. The engineers would stay on-site on the company's dime for several days conducting the service. Now, this same service can be conducted remotely through the Kaseya solution in several hours, speeding up the deployment process, saving travel costs and further enabling seamless scalability of the company's services. According to Frierson, he's seen a 50 percent decrease in assessment services man hours while revenue has gone up.

Fast, Pragmatic Business Growth

The scalability, performance, remote access and automated functionality of the Kaseya solution gives Safe Systems a reliable and robust IT management platform in which to efficiently monitor and maintain its customers' systems, effectively enabling the company's MSP business model. As a result of meeting its aggressive growth goals, Safe Systems has reported a 37 percent increase in MSP sales despite the tough economic climate for community banks. Most importantly, this growth has occurred without the company having to add staff, dramatically increasing profit margins that can go toward even more growth.

"With more than 6,000 clients managed today under the MSP model we're right on track to meet or exceed 15,000 systems by March 2009," Frierson said. "The Kaseya solution allowed us to meet this aggressive growth goal by seamlessly scaling our IT management tools quickly and intelligently. Soon, every customer will be managed by Kaseya, allowing us to gain complete control and visibility into all our customer environments."

In addition, the auditing and asset tracking features in the Kaseya solution help Safe Systems ensure SAS 70 compliance, a mechanism put in place for IT service providers that service community banks. At the touch of a button, network engineers can deliver detailed audit reports to assist their customers in compliance with Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) guidelines. These established controls and reporting features can then be shared with both internal and external auditors. The process not only assists compliance but also reduces the amount of administration required to prove it.

Pleased with the results over the past six months, Safe Systems is also testing Kaseya's Endpoint Security (KES), User State Management (KUSM) and Backup and Disaster Recovery (BU/DR) modules, possibly extending the solution's functionality and adding more services to the company's portfolio. If implemented, administrators will be able to remotely monitor, maintain, update, secure, back up, manage user profiles and monitor power settings of any server or workstation throughout its customer environments. Through Kaseya's scalable IT management framework, these services will be rolled out quickly and seamlessly with minimal disruption to customer systems.

"Kaseya gives us a single tool in which to provide consistent network and Internet technology solutions to our customers, helping them establish a strong foundation for their future growth and success," Frierson said. "It is a mission-critical tool for our company, and it allows us to provide cost-efficient, scalable services to our customers, enabling aggressive growth and a national business model."

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Curt Frierson,
Executive VP of Technology and Education
Safe Systems, Inc.

Key Benefits

- Kaseya's scalable design enables quick service deployment, enabling 25 percent growth per year without requiring additional staff
- New customers were added across the US, expanding national reach and putting the company on pace for 15,000 clients managed by March 2009
- MSP sales increased 37 percent year over year despite a tough economic climate
- Remote and automated management capabilities in the solution save hundreds of man-hours each month, helping to reduce costly on-site visits and other travel-related expenditures and increasing margins
- Network engineers can establish controls and create detailed audit log reports to assist customers in GLBA compliance.

About Kaseya

Kaseya is the leading global provider of IT Systems Management software. Kaseya solutions empower virtually everyone — from individual consumers to large corporations and IT service providers — to proactively monitor, manage and control IT assets remotely, easily and efficiently from one integrated Web-based platform.

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