Success Story:
Avnet, Inc.

FLEXERA SOFTWARE®

Customer Profile:
A Fortune 500 company and one of the largest distributors of electronic components, computer products and embedded technology serving customers in more than 70 countries worldwide.

Challenge:
One-off software requests for thousands of Avnet employees were consuming valuable time for employees and support people. Employees filled out request forms and waited up to two days until the request was processed, approved and assigned to a support person. Support people installed applications remotely, prepared and sent CDs and some installations required in-person visits to the requester's office. This inefficient, manual process was hampering productivity and driving up IT costs.

Solution:
With Flexera Software App Portal (formerly SCCM Expert Self Service), enables the IT staff to streamlined and automate the process of requesting desktop applications, approving requests and delivering applications to user desktops. Instead of working with cumbersome forms, employees browse an online app store and select the applications they need. App Portal kicks off automated workflow that obtains required approvals and hands off the request to Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager for installation.

Benefits:
With App Portal, IT has reduced wait-times for application delivery from days to minutes. The technical staff no longer spends time on repetitive installation tasks allowing more time to work on strategic initiatives. App Portal enabled IT to also help fulfill the corporate mandate to empower employees with self-service tools.

"It's saving us valuable time. We have significantly reduced desktop visits for software installations and we no longer have to spend time sending CDs. By increasing the efficiency around this process our team has more time to focus on our other strategic software initiatives."

Mary McDonald
Desktop Services Supervisor
Avnet, Inc.

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App Portal

Chances are the computer you're using right now contains a component from Avnet, Inc. Avnet is one of the largest distributors of electronic components, enterprise computer products and embedded subsystems in the world. The company employs more than 12,000 people in locations around the globe.

Teamwork and innovation are two important core values that help drive success for this industry leader. The company culture fosters a spirit of cooperation, and employees work together to ensure that everyone has the resources and support required to meet customer needs. Senior management also encourages people to uncover new ideas and creative ways to improve processes.

The IT staff takes these core values seriously. IT provides computing resources and support to Avnet employees to help them work efficiently and effectively. IT recently took a major step in simplifying access to desktop applications, making it easier for employees to get the applications they need and eliminating

burdensome manual efforts that had hampered IT productivity.

Using Flexera Software App Portal, IT created an online app store where employees shop for applications in much the same way consumers shop online for music, books, games and software. The result is higher productivity not only for computer users but also for the IT staff.

Struggling with Manual Processes
In the past, Avnet employees requested desktop applications by filling out a form and submitting it to IT. IT would then assign the request to a support person who would prepare and load the application onto the requester's computer — typically remotely, but sometimes in person. In some cases, the support person prepared and sent installation CDs to the requester.

It took time for requests to make their way through the approval and fulfillment cycle. Meanwhile users had to wait several days to get the applications they needed.

As for IT, staff members recognized that while it didn't take a lot of time to handle a single request, the large number of requests was translating into

a significant amount of time spent on individual installations.

"We wanted to be more efficient, and increase the satisfaction levels of our users," says Trevor Jones, IT manager at Avnet. "We also wanted to increase our use of self-service tools as part of a strategic mandate to empower employees. We decided that a self-service solution for ordering desktop applications could help us meet both objectives."

Finding the Right Solution
The IT team evaluated several alternatives for automating desktop application delivery. After looking at the industry's leading shopping cart solutions, the team determined that that Flexera Software App Portal provided the best value.

"App Portal had more features than the competitive offerings," recalls Adrian Greteman, enterprise system administrator at Avnet. "That was an important factor in our decision. But we also wanted to be able to conduct approvals using Active Directory properties. App Portal was the only solution that offered Active Directory integration as a built-in capability."

Tight integration with Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager was also an important factor in the decision. According to Jones, the developers of App Portal are well-connected in the Configuration Manager community. "They stay on top of industry discussion and we know the products we receive from them reflect industry best practices and direction," he said.

Saving Time and Money

Avnet reports that App Portal was fast and easy to implement, so the company was able to start benefiting from the self-service app store right away. Avnet employees now browse an online catalog and select the applications they want. Online ordering is simpler and less time consuming than the previous manual process.

Once a request is submitted, applications that don't require a license or approvals — for example, Adobe Acrobat Reader — download immediately to the employee's computer. For those that do require approvals, an email message is automatically sent to the appropriate people. Once approvals are collected, App Portal triggers the installation process. Employees can check the progress of the request cycle online, which has reduced the number of support calls to find out the status of a request.

Employees across Avnet are delighted with the reduction in wait-times for their applications. "We're getting very positive feedback." Greteman states. "For software that doesn't require approvals, it's now a matter of minutes instead of one or two days for our end users."

Technical people are also benefiting. "It's saving us valuable time," says Mary McDonald, desktop services supervisor at Avnet. "We have significantly reduced desktop visits for software installations and we no longer have to spend time sending CDs. By increasing the efficiency around this process our team has more time to focus on our other strategic software initiatives."

Delivering Strategic Value

App Portal has helped Avnet improve processes around software request management. "We run reports on what requests were made with details on who made the requests, who approved them, etc." Greteman says. "We didn't have that level of reporting before."

Outstanding Customer Service

Avnet is pleased with the service and support they've received with App Portal. They especially like the close attention to customer feedback. "The developers have always been open to ideas and any feature requests we made," Greteman says. "And their customer service is outstanding. They have helped us out after hours when we needed it, and responded quickly to our calls."

Conclusion

With App Portal, Avnet is giving employees faster access to desktop applications while reducing the burden on IT. With a straightforward online app store, Avnet IT is:

- Accelerating delivery times to enhance employee productivity

- Maintaining strong control over application usage, including which applications people can order and what kind of approvals are required

- Cutting support costs by replacing manual application preparation and delivery efforts with an automated process

- Gaining visibility into the software request process and software license utilization to improve decision making

- Complying with the strategic mandate to empower employees with self-service tools

About Flexera Software

Flexera Software is the leading provider of strategic solutions for Application Usage Management; solutions delivering continuous compliance, optimized usage and maximized value to application producers and their customers. Flexera Software is trusted by more than 80,000 customers that depend on our comprehensive solutions - from installation and licensing, entitlement and compliance management to application readiness and enterprise license optimization - to strategically manage application usage and achieve breakthrough results realized only through the systems-level approach we provide. For more information, please go to: **www.flexerasoftware.com**

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