



Spherion Recruits Foglight® for Effective and Cost-Saving PeopleSoft Management

Spherion Corporation, a leading recruiting and staffing company, provides integrated solutions to meet the evolving needs of companies and job candidates. The company has sourced, screened and placed millions of individuals in temporary, temp-to-hire and full-time jobs. Spherion has approximately 700 locations in the United States and Canada, and employs more than 300,000 people annually through its network. The company's three-tier technology environment comprises WebLogic, Tuxedo and DB2. About 60% of Spherion's IT department is either directly or indirectly involved with the operation and maintenance of the company's core enterprise system: PeopleSoft.

The Challenge

Spherion relies on PeopleSoft for its 24x7 payroll processing and client billing activities. "If PeopleSoft goes offline or does not operate properly, it obviously has a direct impact to the business," said Raj Bahra, Spherion's manager of database administration, whose team is responsible for application and database management.

In order to prevent downtime and performance degradations in PeopleSoft, Spherion initially purchased IBM's Tivoli Monitoring (ITM) as its application management solution. However, the company encountered challenges, starting with ITM's complex implementation process. "It was difficult for us to find the appropriate staff who had enough bandwidth to install it," said Bahra. "We needed to find a different solution that we could deploy quickly and that would be easy to use—something that could provide an immediate benefit."

Spherion needed help urgently to resolve issues of poor performance that end users across the company were reporting.

The Quest Solution

At the time it was struggling with its PeopleSoft management challenges, Spherion already had a strong relationship with Quest, relying on its Stat® solution for change management and its Spotlight® solution for performance diagnostics. Based on the confidence the company had in those products, it decided to purchase Quest Foglight® as its application management solution for PeopleSoft.

Foglight provides a correlated, 360-degree view of applications for rapidly finding and fixing issues that impact the business. It allows organizations to do proactive monitoring and real-time diagnostics so incidents and problems can be resolved in business-critical applications—before end users are affected. Foglight generates models and views of the managed environment, tailored to the needs of key stakeholders.

"Foglight fit the bill for us," stated Bahra. "Quest has consistently produced excellent tools, so we expected nothing less than the best from Foglight. It didn't disappoint; we were able to deploy the solution quickly and found it easy to use."

Foglight's intuitive interface allowed Bahra's team to start using the solution within a short timeframe. "This is a great benefit from a resource management perspective," said Bahra. "The less time I have to spend educating my team on how to use the solution, the more time I can spend teaching them how to apply its metrics. This allows me to help even junior employees become productive very quickly."

Along with its benefits of fast deployment, reduced training time and enhanced staff productivity, Foglight offers greater visibility into PeopleSoft and its environment for more rapid discovery and resolution of issues. "Foglight gave us flexibility and power that we didn't have before, which was to do a deep dive into the PeopleSoft layer," stated Dennis Robbins, Spherion's senior systems administrator. "Quest's competitors do not offer products with the same level of visibility. Foglight gives us the ability to see our environment end-to-end—from the web tier, to the application, and all the way down to the database. It's just very powerful."

The Bottom Line

Soon after Foglight was implemented, it helped to resolve the performance issues reported by end users. "Using Foglight, we were able to replay typical end-user transactions," said Bahra. "Foglight's visibility allowed us to see that the issues were originating even in the network layer. Now, Foglight is not only our standard application management utility, but it's also used to monitor some of the infrastructure behind PeopleSoft."

Foglight has also allowed Spherion to handle end-user issues in a proactive manner. "We can track typical end-user transactions and get alerts if any major deviations or skews occur," said Bahra. "Foglight allows us to identify potential issues and fix them before they become problems for end users—ensuring a higher level of availability and performance."

Foglight's capabilities enabled Spherion to process payroll faster, reducing the time from 1.5 days to only four hours. "As a direct result, we save \$60,000 each weekly payroll cycle by eliminating the need for expedited delivery services to ensure we meet our SLAs," said Bahra. "In addition, Foglight helped us enhance the efficiency of our billing process, which now takes about six to eight hours instead of two

"Using Foglight, we were able to reduce weekly operational expenses by \$60,000 and annual maintenance costs by \$150,000."

- Raj Bahra
Manager of Database Administration
Spherion

Overview

Headquarters

Fort Lauderdale, Fla

Services

Employee recruitment and staffing

Critical Needs

- Effectively monitor and manage PeopleSoft
- Rapidly implement an easy-to-use solution
- Quickly resolve performance issues reported by end users

Solutions

- Foglight
- Quest Support
- Quest Professional Services

Results

- Deployed Foglight and trained staff rapidly through Quest services
- Gained unparalleled visibility into PeopleSoft environment
- Found and resolved performance issues quickly, before end users were impacted
- Reaped cost savings through correct hardware provisioning and consolidation
- Saved time and increased staff productivity through automation
- Helped prevent unauthorized system access

to three days. Our staff now spends the time we've saved working on other critical projects, instead of routine tasks. We were even able to reduce the number of days in our billing cycle from 90 to 30."

Foglight has also saved the company staff time. The team responsible for the company's custom Cognos application began using Foglight to automate its manual application monitoring process. "In order to monitor performance, someone on the team would log into Cognos a couple of times per day and perform typical end-user activities to see if everything functioned properly," said Bahra. "Now, Foglight monitors this for us—saving an hour or two of time each day."

In addition, Bahra's team has used Foglight to enhance the performance of Fast Indexing and Fast Search, an application that is tied to PeopleSoft and used heavily by Spherion's recruitment team for candidate searches. The application was running slowly and crashing unexpectedly. "We used Foglight not only to resolve these problems, but completely automate the monitoring process," said Bahra. "As a result, we reduced the total number of staff working on that effort from 10 to zero—and reassigned them to other important IT projects."

Besides helping Spherion find root causes of issues and fix them, Foglight offers reporting capabilities to deliver valuable metrics. This has allowed the company to accurately provision hardware during its server migration projects. "Our CIO and CTO reviewed Foglight's utilization metrics, which gave us a really good idea of how our system was behaving, and how it might behave in the future," said Bahra. "The data included peak and off-peak load times, the I/O pattern, the processing pattern, the end-user count and web activity. Foglight ensured that we made efficient use of our hardware resources. There were direct cost savings there because we could have potentially spent a lot more than we needed to, or have been stuck in a situation where we had underprovisioned."

When Spherion purchased its new IBM P590, the company used Foglight to optimize the server by reducing its work load, making room for more data. "Today, that one P590 is actually home to what used to be on about a dozen different servers," said Bahra. "Using Foglight, we were able to consolidate our infrastructure, eliminating \$150,000 in annual maintenance costs, and deferring the need for additional hardware purchases."

Foglight's success has motivated other groups within Spherion's IT department to ask for the solution. "We are a fairly sizeable IT shop," said Bahra. "The Wintel and web administrators have requested Foglight for their areas, and other groups come to us directly to help them analyze and resolve difficult problems using Foglight. We even used it to assist our data center operators—who work in an AIX environment—with a low memory error, even though my team members are not AIX or system administrators on the operating side. Plus, our IT security team uses Foglight to monitor suspicious activity, including unusual access or behavior patterns."

Quest Professional Services Organization (PSO) and Quest Support have added tremendous value to the Foglight solution, according to Bahra. "PSO did a fine job during our Foglight implementation, and Quest Support has been great in all areas," said Bahra. "Whenever we've had any kind of a support issue or technical challenge, I know that my team does not hesitate to pick up the phone and give Quest a call."

Bahra is pleased with his strong business relationship with his Quest representative. "Our rep is always responsive, and has organized several meetings between both of our senior management teams to help us get a good understanding of where Quest is headed, and how that direction can help our business."

Bahra's future plans for Foglight include using the solution to secure additional cost savings for his company. "We will use Foglight to see how we can further simplify our infrastructure, reducing maintenance and administration costs," he said.

About Spherion

Spherion Corporation is a leading recruiting and staffing company that provides integrated solutions to meet the evolving needs of companies and job candidates. As an industry pioneer for more than 60 years, Spherion has sourced, screened and placed millions of individuals in temporary, temp-to-hire and full-time jobs. Spherion provides its services to more than 8,000 customers, from Fortune 500 companies to a wide range of small and mid-size organizations. To learn more, visit <http://www.spherion.com/>.

About Quest Software, Inc.

Quest Software, Inc., a leading enterprise systems management vendor, delivers innovative products that help organizations get more performance and productivity from their applications, databases, Windows infrastructure, and virtual environments. Quest also provides customers with client management through its ScriptLogic subsidiary and server virtualization management through its Vizioncore subsidiary. Through a deep expertise in IT operations and a continued focus on what works best, Quest helps more than 100,000 customers worldwide meet higher expectations for enterprise IT. Quest provides customers with client management as well as server and desktop virtualization solutions through its subsidiaries, ScriptLogic and Vizioncore. Quest's Foglight® application management solution unifies IT services with end users and the business, resolves problems faster to reduce downtime, and lowers the operating cost of managing applications. Quest Software can be found in offices around the globe and at www.quest.com.

Quest Software Incorporated. • To learn more about our solutions, contact your local sales representative or visit www.quest.com • Headquarters: 5 Polaris Way, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656, USA

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