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## Accenture Centralizes and Simplifies Its IT Security to Support High Performance

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Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company. With more than 187,000 people in 52 countries, the company generated net revenues of US\$23.39 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2008.

Like many large organizations, Accenture had a variety of manual IT user identity and access management processes that had evolved over time and were creating significant inefficiencies in its efforts to ensure that systems were kept secure.

For example, users with password problems had to call a help desk for assistance from live agents, who were fielding some 6,000 password reset calls a month. "It was a manual process, and the way to deal with any password issues was to pick up the phone and call the help desk," says Jeff McIlrath, CIO Information Security Lead at Accenture. As the company grew, the process—and several other manual security-related activities—were becoming increasingly costly and cumbersome, and could have limited the company's ability to leverage IT in support of high performance. Accenture

turned to its own Oracle Security practice including professionals from the Accenture Delivery Centers in Manila and Bangalore for their deep understanding of Oracle Identity Manager to implement a solution to meet the company's business needs.

### Re-thinking password resets

To address these problems, Accenture used Oracle Identity Manager software to centralize and streamline identity and access management processes across the company. To begin with, the Accenture CIO Organization—the company's IT organization—implemented and rolled-out Oracle Identity Manager's automated, self-service password reset capability. With this system, employees with password problems work with an online, intuitive self-service interface to answer personalized verification questions—such as the brand of their first car or

their pet's name—to be automatically identified and allowed to reset their passwords. The password project was completed by a small Accenture IT team in just four months, allowing the company to demonstrate the value of the approach and to begin reaping financial benefits quickly.

As important as that project was, it was just the beginning. With Oracle Identity Manager in place, the company had a platform that it could build on to address other inefficiencies. The CIO Organization quickly turned its attention to the process used to register authentication tokens and associate them with employees' enterprise-wide user IDs. With the previous solution, users were required to go through a seven-page online form, which proved to be too complicated and employees failed to complete it correctly 40 percent of the time—prompting

frustrated users to call live support agents. Accenture redesigned this registration process so that those seven pages were condensed into one, a simplification that made it easier to complete the registration using the online, automated system.

### **Tackling complexity with automation**

The Accenture team then began to use the Oracle Identity Manager platform to address one of its more complex processes—the provisioning of key SAP enterprise applications, including its customer relationship management, human resources and business warehouse systems. Until then, provisioning was being done manually, with a great deal of effort. “Provisioning at Accenture involves a complicated workflow in which a person requests access, the request is routed to administrators for two levels of approval, and then someone has to manually enable the appropriate user access to the SAP applications,” says McIlrath. This was not only slow and costly; it also increased the potential for errors and made it difficult to provide the information needed to comply with Sarbanes-Oxley regulations that required proof of secure access to financial systems.

Using Oracle's out-of-the-box connector for SAP, Accenture automated this entire provisioning process, providing some key enhancements along the way. For example, when users weren't sure what level of access they needed, they tended to ask for global access. Within the existing solution, administrators fielding these requests could only respond by granting or denying access, with denials bouncing the request back to the user and triggering rounds of back-and-forth communications. With the implementation of Oracle Identity Manager, Accenture was able to

expedite the entire process, giving administrators the option to modify requests, add comments and allow the appropriate level of access.

### **Teaming for innovation**

Accenture brought together skilled professionals from a variety of internal and external groups to manage these complex efforts. The core CIO Organization team drew on the knowledge and skills of the Accenture Delivery Center in Manila to help with the password reset and SecurID token registration projects, and the Accenture Delivery Center in Bangalore for help with the SAP provisioning effort. Accenture's Oracle Security practice assisted with solution design and quality assurance, as did professionals from Oracle Consulting Services.

### **High performance delivered**

With the innovative use of Oracle Identity Manager, Accenture has been able to standardize and centralize its approach to identity and access management, and automate and streamline previously cumbersome security-related tasks. And in true partnership and customer commitment, Oracle leveraged Accenture's input and the use case to further enhance its feature support based on the password reset and authentication token registration processes developed by Accenture.

Accenture continues to build on its Oracle Identity Manager platform. For example, since the completion of those initial projects, the CIO Organization has enabled help desk agents to use the verification question database and authentication tokens to identify callers—a cost-effective approach to providing additional security. The system now handles some 8,500 transactions a month, and the password reset initiative has dramatically cut the need for human intervention,

eliminating 80 percent of the calls coming into the help desk and yielding \$2.8 million in savings in three years. “While security projects are critical, it's not very often that you also see them deliver the kind of direct bottom-line savings we've realized. With Oracle Identity Manager, we have been able to bring the company cost-efficiencies while strengthening security, and we have a platform that will let us continue to pursue continued improvements in the future,” says McIlrath.

Meanwhile, as the authentication token registration and SAP provisioning systems have come online, they have further added to the savings figure. The overall, net savings to date from the initiative has exceeded \$3.2 million. And while not quantified fully, with the implementation of Oracle Identity Manager, Accenture has been able to certify with confidence who has or had access to what, when, why and approved by whom within the SAP application; a requirement for Accenture's Sarbanes Oxley compliance. Most importantly, Accenture has improved its identity and access management processes to gain better control over IT access, helping the company make effective use of its technology—which is key to achieving high performance.

## About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company.

Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. With more than 187,000 people serving clients in over 120 countries, the company generated net revenues of US\$23.39 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2008. Its home page is [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com).

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