



ResponseConcepts reduces cost, elevates customer experience and enables GDPR compliance with Puppet Enterprise

CASE STUDY



Industry

Full-service marketing agency

About

ResponseConcepts is a leading innovative permission marketing agency that builds long-term partnerships by consistently adding value to its partners' businesses. Founded in 2011 and headquartered in the Netherlands, it has five global offices, operates in 13 countries, and has a team of over 90 specialists and professionals.

Executive Summary

During a period of rapid growth, leading Dutch full-service marketing agency, ResponseConcepts, faced the challenge of maintaining IT infrastructure performance in the face of an increasing volume of time-consuming manual server updates. The company turned to Puppet Enterprise to automate continuous IT deployment, support its growth and enable GDPR compliance..

Challenge

The previous IT infrastructure struggled to support the rapid expansion of the company, while manual configurations and the maintenance of its servers consumed valuable time and resources. The business also needed to optimise its ability to comply with GDPR regulations.

IT Environment

Previously, ResponseConcepts rented VMware ESXi virtual machines on a per-machine basis. Having to scale up full machine capacity, rather than specific nodes on demand, prevented ResponseConcepts from dynamically scaling the infrastructure in a cost-effective way.

Solution

Puppet Enterprise enables the team to remove any decision-making associated with the grouping and classification of infrastructure tasks. It assists the IT team in automating continuous IT deployments, saving time and effort, and provides the foundation for business growth and GDPR compliance.

In addition, the organization can now consider deploying its own virtual machines from scratch, thanks to Puppet's ability to pre-define infrastructure resources. This supports dynamically scalable, on-demand IT resourcing.

Results

ResponseConcepts is able to provide uninterrupted services to its customers. Updating and adding new services to its systems is automated, faster, and simpler than before. The IT team has more time available to concentrate on innovation and improving services. The company also has the ability to support objectives for GDPR compliance. The freedom to focus on other priorities, such as deploying new internal software and services, has yielded benefits to ResponseConcepts, including an estimated value-add of between €250,000-€500,000.

Automating and standardizing configuration results in huge improvements

Created as a marketing lead generation company, ResponseConcepts has evolved into an innovative permission marketing agency. Its specialists constantly adapt and develop new offerings to work in fast-paced marketing environments. This evolution has led to rapid growth, new customers, new service offerings, and new countries to support. With GDPR quickly approaching, the company also needed to meet regulatory compliance requirements.

To achieve their objectives, ResponseConcepts needed an IT environment that could keep pace with current loads and prepare the company for growth at scale. The 12-person IT team was struggling to support and manage everything and was expending a lot of manual effort on configuration tasks and maintaining servers. Ioan Bercea, technical director at ResponseConcepts, decided to standardize and automate many of the processes that were taking up so much of his team's time.

Newly appointed systems administrator at ResponseConcepts, Jacco van Koll, already had experience working with Puppet. He believed it was the exact solution that his IT technical director was looking for.

“Puppet was a great fit for ResponseConcepts. Based on my previous experience, it only took us a week to install Puppet Enterprise, meaning we could go about our day-to-day responsibilities at the same time,” said van Koll. “To have the ability to continue working on existing projects whilst changing over part of our IT infrastructure was vital to the overall running of the business.”

Puppet enabled the company to standardize infrastructure management rules, automate the process of adding and removing users from its systems, and provided the foundation for automatically scaling VMware environments. Puppet automated a lot of the manual work involved in deploying users and SSH authorized keys. “Prior to using Puppet Enterprise, the IT team had to go to every machine, copy the keys by hand and create each user manually, taking up a lot of valuable time and resources,” revealed Bercea.

ResponseConcepts estimates that by using Puppet Enterprise it can set up a new web server, install a new machine, run a Puppet agent, accept an certificate, and have the machine up and running within 20 minutes or quicker. This is a great improvement over the manual processes previously in place, where it could take between two and three hours per machine.

Another benefit of using Puppet Enterprise is that this process can be carried out simultaneously, meaning that instead of spending three to four hours deploying one machine at a time, multiple machines can be rolled out at the same time, providing effective time savings.

Saving time with Puppet Enterprise

The company chose Puppet Enterprise for various reasons, including its web interface and the ability to nest groupings and classifications, and put environment variables into the classifications. Puppet Enterprise has removed a lot of the decision making usually associated with these tasks, saving the IT team time and effort. It is also significantly easier to install new customers quickly and efficiently, which supports the business’ growth plans.

Puppet also supports ResponseConcepts’ GDPR compliance plans. “When it comes to GDPR, you need to prove that a system is the way you say it is. Any changes made are reverted back to the environment you define within Puppet Enterprise,” Jacco van Koll commented. By being GDPR compliant, ResponseConcepts will have an even stronger business case to attract more partners and clients, aiding in the company’s future expansion.

Implementing Puppet Enterprise has saved ResponseConcepts a lot of time, but also a lot of money. In fact, the company estimates it has saved the cost of one full-time employee, around €80,000 every year, and has provided the IT team with more time to look at other tasks, such as removing the remaining legacy systems from its infrastructure. Bercea added “Having Puppet in place, and having a more reliable IT infrastructure has had another, immeasurable, effect – we are not losing clients or missing out on new opportunities.”

Automatic scalability on the horizon

Bercea is also using Puppet Enterprise as part of the company's plans to introduce automatic scalability for its customers, enabling them to scale up and down according to their needs. The capability to automatically drop systems off at times of low demand would help customers save money during non peak hours.

"In the future, we would like to help our customers automatically scale, something that we couldn't turn our attention to previously, due to it being such a large task. But now with Puppet Enterprise, everything has become a lot simpler. This really puts my mind at ease, and I don't have to worry about it anymore," comments Bercea.

Why Puppet?

ResponseConcepts chose Puppet primarily as it enables its IT team to save on both time and effort. Specifically, the company chose Puppet Enterprise for ability to nest groupings and classifications, classify environment variables and web interface.

ResponseConcepts estimates that by using Puppet Enterprise it can set up a new web server, install a new machine, run a Puppet agent, accept a certificate and have the machine up and running within 20 minutes, if not quicker. This is in contrast to the slow, manual process in place previously.

Top outcomes of using Puppet Enterprise

- Significant time saved in configuring and maintaining systems
- Significantly easier to get new customers up and running with ResponseConcepts' services
- Much faster deployments, taking just over a tenth of the time it did before and providing higher productivity rates
- More time for innovation and the development of new services
- Agility of the product to scale with the growth of the company