

US Synthetic Deployment of Dell KACE Appliance Saves 50,000 Hours in End-User Productivity



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*Jacob Lee,
IT help desk administrator,
US Synthetic*

Customer profile

Industry:	Manufacturing
Founded:	1978
Number of Employees:	700
Website:	http://www.ussynthetic.com

Business need

US Synthetic stands as an innovative leader in the energy industry, yet many of its internal IT processes were antiquated. Prior to Dell KACE, employees were not receiving the tech support necessary for a large-scale organization and overall company efficiency was negatively affected.

Solution

US Synthetic quickly learned that the [service desk](#) feature of the Dell KACE Appliance could easily solve its support issues. In a matter of weeks, the US Synthetic IT department eliminated in-person manual support, automated IT processes and streamlined reporting, leading to an increase in end-user satisfaction and huge gains in end-user productivity.



Save Time. Save Your Organization Money.

- Gained \$312,500 in overall end-user productivity within the first year
- Saved 12,500 hours in user productivity
- Improved asset management by 60 percent
- Enhanced patch compliance by 30 percent
- Saved \$5,000 annually in newly found assets
- ROI in 3.5 months

US Synthetic leads the industry in the development and production of polycrystalline diamond cutters for oil and gas exploration. Headquartered in Orem, Utah, US Synthetic employs 700 people, with about half focused on the actual manufacturing of the tools and drill bits, and the other half running the business side of the company.

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In all, the small IT team of four oversees 400 computer stations running 24/7. The team spends most of its time managing service desk and IT assets. US Synthetic runs a variety of [Dell products](#) including OptiPlex desktops as well as Macs, iPhones and iPads.

From an IT perspective, service desk was a major issue. From the user perspective, it was a nightmare as the manual methods in place took far too long, and in some extreme cases computers were simply left unfixed. The IT team was too busy with larger issues and just couldn’t keep pace with user demand for tech support. Most users were forced to wait several hours for help or even longer. User downtime due to technical issues became an on-going problem as much of the manufacturing processes are automated. Prior to the Dell KACE Appliance and automated service desk, it took a machine to completely break down and render non-functional before an IT team member knew something was wrong. Most early technical warnings that a machine wasn’t working properly were missed, and it took a frantic call from the end-user to bring it to the IT team’s attention.

“In the past, we had no true service desk technology in place—everything was done manually, and we were forced to walk around the large plant and treat each computer incident one at a time,” said Jacob Lee, IT help desk administrator at US Synthetic. “In many cases, we would run into our users that were looking for us as we were on our way

to fight a different fire. You can imagine the tension emanating off of us from working on twenty things at once, and the frustration coming from our users.”

Slow ‘Tech Support’ and Missing Company Assets Plague the IT Team

Another issue the IT team dealt with on a frequent basis was a loss of revenue resulting from the company’s informal IT asset management systems. IT asset management is the set of business practices that join financial, contractual and inventory functions to support the overall business infrastructure and is a key component of strategic decision making for the IT environment. Assets for US Synthetic include all software, hardware and license agreements within the business environment. Without a set asset management process in place, the IT team lost line of sight of its inventory, which not only forced them to physically have to look for lost computer items, wasting a lot of time, but the team’s lack of knowledge of what was “running under the covers” made strategic budget decisions tougher to make and usually led to less budget allocation for the IT department.

Technology at Work

Solutions

[Dell KACE™ K1000 Management Appliance](#)

"Before we brought in the Dell KACE Appliances, we spent up to 25 hours per month manually searching for lost IT assets, such as computers and printers, and it was largely unknown to us what applications ran on the computers being used by our end-users," Lee said. "License compliance was also a bear of a project. A change was drastically needed."

US Synthetic Gained More Than \$300K per Year in End-User Productivity with Dell KACE

Last year the IT team decided a formal system and method change needed to take place issues with regards to service desk and asset management. The [Dell KACE Management Appliance](#) quickly was seen as the top choice due to ease-of-use, low price point and breadth of services. The IT team really liked the appliance's automation capabilities and recognized right away it could do much more in addition to solving their service desk challenges. The features Dell KACE offered within its appliance far exceeded that of the competing products they evaluated.

With the help of Dell KACE's free support, the appliance was up and running in a matter of days. Immediately the K1000 service desk capabilities automated and streamlined the overall help ticket management process for end-users. The K1000's innovative email ticketing system quickly took care of any open tickets, and the system updated itself all day and night even when IT had left for the evening. In manufacturing, 24/7 support is key and the K1000 service desk feature kept pace.

"The appliance is so intuitive and the process so automated that instead of having to wait for someone to see me about a technology issue like in the old days, the K1000 actually tells me there is an issue to look into, allowing me to be proactive and go out and make fixes before the issues get out of hand," said

Lee. "We show up at end-user's desks before they even realize their computers are having issues. Most of the time, we're greeted by a look of surprise because they hadn't called me yet. The ability to direct users to the service desk has dramatically reduced my workload, so I now have an idea of what I am doing each day. The K1000 helps me to be proactive instead of reactive in the work I do."

US Synthetic has benefited greatly since deploying the K1000 in 2010 to the tune of \$312,500 in user productivity gains. Based off of Lee's estimate combining the time savings of US Synthetic's 250 employees tethered to a workstation, end users saved one hour or a quarter of the time previously spent resolving issues. The benefits seem miniscule yet add up across the company. Asset management was another area the K1000 helped the team as they were able to save \$5,000 soon after deployment from locating what they thought were "lost assets" from continuous employee relocations. In all, the K1000 Appliance paid for itself in less than four months.

Lee explained that as soon as they brought the appliance online it began sending back actionable data about the IT hardware and software assets across the entire US Synthetic IT network. Lee said, "We are able to provide support from anywhere in the world with the Dell KACE Appliance. That makes us very mobile."

In addition, the team will be able to better monitor software licenses to stay within the license agreements set with software vendors. For instance, US Synthetic is a Microsoft shop and runs the Office 2010 suite and an Exchange server.

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All have license agreements and the Dell KACE Management Appliance monitors these and offers automatic updates to the IT team about licenses that are coming due, or licenses that are not being used so the team can add or drop licenses accordingly. This dynamic license management, combined with the thorough asset tracking has improved overall asset management for US Synthetic by 60 percent in only one year.

"This is a fantastic appliance and it has benefitted the company dramatically,"

said Lee. "We have improved our service, which has made our end users happy, and we are saving money, which makes the management team happy. In addition, members of the IT team are able to walk around knowing things are under control across the entire infrastructure. Dell KACE has given us a hop in our step we didn't have before as we have regained our confidence in the performance of our IT system. Now, we have the time to learn more capabilities of the Dell KACE Appliance to use."



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