

AGNE Installs CCSS's QMessage Monitor for 'Lights Out' Processing in Citrix Environment

January 30, 2009 – QMessage Monitor (QMM), the CCSS message monitoring and escalation solution for Power™ Systems running IBM® i and System i™ servers, is helping Associated Grocers of New England, Inc. (AGNE), to achieve advantageous new levels of automation in their demanding Citrix® environment. AGNE is the largest retailer-owned wholesale grocery distribution center in New England and additionally offers its retail customers a wide range of products, services, programs and technologies. From their HQ in Pembroke, New Hampshire, a group of nine IT team members service the needs of over 100 internal customers and almost 500 external customer stores in the New England and Upstate New York/Albany areas.

At the hardworking center of AGNE's business operations is a well planned IT environment that employs solutions designed to maximize their efficiency and minimize their overhead. The framework of their environment is an IBM iSeries® 520 (3 LPARs), some 13 integrated IBM Blade Servers and a host of essential applications including Retailix Power Enterprise™ suite, MS® Office Suite, Cadec® Mobius TTS®, Retailix Power Net (their customer ordering website) and one of the defining elements of their computing environment, Citrix, the application delivery solution. The latest addition to this list is QMessage Monitor, from CCSS, chosen for its ability to interface with their Citrix environment (three Citrix servers and Citrix Access Gateway™) and achieve a 'lights out' automation status for their critical day, week and month end processing.

Whilst all IBM i environments are familiar with day/week/month end processing tasks, for AGNE they are especially important as the process must run without error and must complete to post various accounting transactions and close out the day, week or fiscal month. The team also runs a full system save at the end of the month and QMessage Monitor ensures that they no longer need to dedicate resources to manage these tasks as they are alerted of any system problems immediately. The example perfectly illustrates the 'management by exception' approach inherent in the CCSS solutions and the financial benefits these can pass on to organizations.

Ken Peperissa, Director of Information Technology at AGNE, says without a solution like QMessage Monitor, these essential tasks not only have a cost value in terms of dedicated man power (the team employed a part-time operator), but also have the potential to pass on issues to customers as a direct result of system problems. Peperissa says that prior to installing QMM, if employees outside of IT did not complete certain processes, there was a severe impact on

AGNE's ability to deliver products or services to their end customers. Now QMM notifies the ITEAM in real-time when these processes are not completed and they can take action before there is an issue."

Peperissa and his team utilize the event monitoring capabilities of QMessage Monitor across a range of tasks to make sure they have started or completed by defined times. Examples include ensuring tapes have been loaded in the autoloader by 4 PM, that Accounting has supplied a check number for month end processing by 4 PM, or their weekly price update process has started on Wednesday by 6 PM. If these actions do not occur, the monitoring program creates a message allowing QMM to alert the appropriate people. In this case, QMessage Monitor detects the event has not occurred and emails the message to their paging service, which in turn pages members of their ITEAM in defined sequence until there is a response. Peperissa says, "The minute the pager goes off we know exactly which LPAR and the exact system message. It's that simple. No investigation time required."

Recalling a problem prior to installing QMM when the weekly price update process did not submit, Peperissa says, "The ramifications were quite disruptive and resulted in several individuals 'pulling an all nighter' to recover." Since the installation of QMM, the AGNE team is able to prevent these situations. On a similar occasion, according to Peperissa, QMM alerted the team at 6PM that the price update process had not submitted as scheduled. With this notification, the individual in charge was able to start the process from home (using the Citrix Access Gateway), averting another late night with pro-active system management.

In another instance, QMM paged the on call programmer who signed in from home, resolved the issue, and informed the warehouse personnel of the resolution before they ever knew there was a problem. "Before QMM they would have waited until they suspected something was wrong because they were not getting their paperwork. QMM allowed us to resolve the issue before impacting our delivery schedule." says Peperissa.

With organizations looking to gain new means of staying competitive in their markets, AGNE demonstrates that the right solutions can have a measurable impact on profits. QMessage Monitor is part of the trilogy of automated solutions from CCSS designed with the pressures of the economy in mind, helping IT Managers to save time and money on a daily basis.

For more information on QMessage Monitor, please visit:

<http://www.ccssltd.com/products/QMessageMonitor.html>

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About CCSS

CCSS develops, supports and markets IBM i (on Power Systems & System i servers) performance monitoring and reporting, message management and remote management solutions. An Advanced IBM Business Partner, CCSS develops powerful solutions to support some of the world's most demanding IBM i environments across many industries including insurance, banking, pharmaceutical and manufacturing. Existing customers that rely on CCSS's feature-rich solutions include leading organizations such as Volvo, Mattel, Newell-Rubbermaid, The Royal Bank of Scotland, Siemens Healthcare, and Waterstone's.

CCSS is headquartered in Gillingham, Kent, UK with key regional headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA; Bonn, Germany and Makati City, Philippines together with a global agent network spanning Austria, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.

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