Fubon Life Insurance

Riverbed SteelCentral empowers Fubon Life Insurance to accelerate its digital transformation and reinforce its leading position in the insurance industry by providing unified, seamless visibility into network and application performance.

Company description

Fubon Life Insurance is one of the subsidiaries of Taiwan Fubon Financial Holding Co., Corp., Taiwan's second-largest listed financial holding company. Founded in 1993, Fubon Life Insurance is the second-largest insurance company in Taiwan with more than 5.8 million policyholders and 27,000+ employees.

In Brief

Challenges

- New e-commerce options for customers and other digital transformation initiatives create greater IT complexity

- Private cloud environment increases the need for improved network security and transaction visibility

- Lack of visibility across IT infrastructure makes it difficult to identify the root cause of performance issues

Solution

- Riverbed® SteelCentral™ for end-to-end application and network performance management

Benefits

- Ability to identify and fix performance issues before they affect the business

- Reduced operating costs

- New applications are de-bugged prior to rollout

- Better IT team collaboration and efficiency

- Improved forensic analysis

- Higher customer satisfaction and system reliability

- Solid foundation for ongoing digital transformation and improved competitiveness

Partner

- Sanfran Technologies Inc.

Expanded insurance options pose challenges for IT

In 2011, Fubon Life Insurance became one of the first insurance companies in Taiwan to introduce mobile solutions. Since then, the company has continued to take advantage of technology advancements to better serve its customers. Especially since 2015, these advances have resulted in more product lines and strong growth, and consequently, more challenges for the 300-person IT team.

"Every new service requires collaboration among IT staff with different roles," says Jonah Wang, senior deputy manager of information service for Fubon Life Insurance. "For example, application developers focus on the development and operation of the program, while network managers are responsible for the internal and external online status, and server administers maintain the allocation of computing resources, etc."

In 2011, Fubon moved its infrastructure to a private cloud environment, using server virtualization to achieve elastic scheduling of resources and the ability to horizontally expand computing power to meet future growth. However, the lack of visibility into cloud applications, along with higher requirements for development efficiency and larger data exchanges between different application systems, made it difficult for the IT team to ensure application performance.

"Though each person has his own distinct responsibilities, we lacked a common communication platform oriented to application services and from the perspective of users," Jonah Wang explains. "This prevented us from integrating when coping with problems and developing applications. We could only solve problems one by one, without a holistic picture."

This led the company on a search for a network and application performance management solution that would allow them to quickly find root causes of problems in system performance and troubleshoot in real time. The selection process included a Proof of Concept (PoC) to verify product functionality and also to confirm that the system integrator was familiar with the products and able to smoothly complete their deployment.

After conducting this thorough and careful process, Fubon Life Insurance chose Riverbed® SteelCentral™, a solution recommended by Riverbed partner Sanfran Technologies, Inc.

"Most of the other similar solutions only focused on application performance management (APM), without a deep integration with network performance management (NPM)," says Jonah Wang. "Riverbed SteelCentral combines the functions of both NPM and APM, fully integrating user experiences, applications, infrastructure and network monitoring, truly achieving the end-to-end application performance visibility and bridging the information gap. It is also very important to monitor the response performance of each node in the network for each transaction. That's what cannot be achieved by other products."

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Jonah Wang
Senior Deputy Manager of Information Service,
Fubon Life Insurance

SteelCentral delivers unified and seamless insight into network and application performance

With SteelCentral, Fubon Life Insurance now has a complete and tightly integrated end-to-end performance management solution that enables monitoring across the cloud, internal and external end users, applications, and the network infrastructure. The company found SteelCentral easy to deploy, with the solution delivering business value immediately after installation.

Fubon Life Insurance started its use of Riverbed SteelCentral by monitoring10 key applications. One of earliest benefits was the ability to identify the cause of application performance problems quickly and resolve them before they affect the business. "We have hundreds of applications and servers, and when the business volume reaches a peak point, our business is at risk of being shut down if the back-end system is not reliable, and this greatly impairs the monthly business performance," says Jonah Wang. "With SteelCentral, we are now able to identify and solve problems in a timely manner and make relative improvements based on the existing problems, so as to increase the stability of the system."

Another outcome of the SteelCentral deployment has been a reduction in operating costs. "With the continuous monitoring from Riverbed SteelCentral, we are able to see network bandwidth usage, and by doing this, we can save operating costs and increase resilience in a rapidly changing business environment." Another benefit is improved communication among people with different roles. "By allowing visibility into system and network performance, SteelCentral enables better communication among IT staff itself, and between IT staff and users," says Jonah Wang. "Better teamwork is an additional benefit we have gained."

Data security is vital for insurance companies, and Riverbed SteelCentral has been playing an irreplaceable role here. In the past, the company's information security appliance was used mainly to identify various security behaviors and generate reports, but it was unable to save the actual transmission data or transaction procedures. Riverbed SteelCentral NetShark enables real-time and back-in-time forensic analysis, and this value is enhanced when combined with SteelCentral AppResponse. With these tools, both packet data and application contents can be stored and analyzed, allowing forensic application analysis and end-user experience monitoring through a single platform.

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Perhaps most importantly, SteelCentral supports Fubon Life Insurance's ongoing digital transformation. For example, SteelCentral supports application development by making it possible to analyze and test new services before they go live. "We now use a combination of SteelCentral and pressure testing tools," says Jonah Wang. "This allows us to address problems during testing so that once applications are rolled out into the real environment they are trouble-free.

"We have a multitude of new ideas and newly developed technologies that can be evaluated by SteelCentral, especially performance evaluation and alignment before being introduced and going to the market," adds Jonah Wang. "With SteelCentral we can choose the best solution that promotes revenue and increases productivity. Before we adopted Riverbed solutions, we strived to find IT problems through trial-and-error, which resulted in costs related to software, hardware, and labor. With SteelCentral, these problems have been solved, reducing largely unnecessary costs."

Andy Du, senior deputy general manager and director of information service at Fubon Life Insurance sums up the role of SteelCentral this way: "We are already a very typical hybrid enterprise. With container technology becoming more and more mature, and machine learning sweeping around the world, we are looking forward to adopting some of these new technologies as a way of providing better services for the businesses and users. It will no longer be possible for people to monitor processes or data transmission paths. Digital business requires a digital way to monitor and analyze in order to adapt to the ever-changing real environment. We expect further close cooperation with Riverbed as we move into a more diversified technical environment."

About Riverbed
Riverbed Technology, Inc. enables organizations to modernize their networks and applications with industry-leading SD-WAN, application acceleration, and visibility solutions. Riverbed's platform allows enterprises to transform application and cloud performance into a competitive advantage by maximizing employee productivity and leveraging IT to create new forms of operational agility. At more than $1 billion in annual revenue, Riverbed's 28,000+ customers include 97% of the *Fortune* 100 and 98% of the *Forbes* Global 100. Learn more at riverbed.com.

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