Blackbaud Case Study

Introduction

Blackbaud, Inc. is the leading global provider of software and services designed specifically for nonprofit organizations, enabling them to improve operational efficiency, build strong relationships, and raise more money to support their missions. Approximately 22,000 organizations use one or more of Blackbaud products and services for fundraising, constituent relationship management, financial management, direct marketing and other important back office functions.

One of the many solutions that Blackbaud offers its customers is for direct marketing, where customers can manage their own email campaigns to their supporters and donors. Back in 2007 the company realized that based on the volume of email and the number of customers it was servicing; it needed a more robust solution for email delivery. Beyond volume, Blackbaud also needed a bulk email solution that provided the deliverability features required in today's email marketing environment to ensure that their customer's email gets to its intended recipients.

Blackbaud decided to do a comprehensive evaluation of enterprise Mail Transfer Agents (MTA) to replace its current MTA. They had been using SMTP Express Pro from Quiksoft, the sister company to Socket-Labs but, realized they had outgrown it. After an extensive evaluation process, Blackbaud chose Hurricane MTA Server because it provided the performance it needed, the deliverability features it was looking for and was a native Windows application that fit well with the rest of the company's infrastructure.

Blackbaud's top three criteria for selecting a new MTA fell into three categories: deliverability, integration and reporting.

Deliverability

Key to its success, Blackbaud understood the complexity of sending bulk email in today's market. The team understood that one of the keys to successfully sending email to the large ISPs was to support security standards that enable the ISPs to validate the email sender. Hurricane MTA Server provides Blackbaud with support for all common standards including, Domain Keys, DKIM, SPF and SenderID.

Another feature that is important to Blackbaud is the ability to segment email onto virtual MTAs and across multiple IP addresses within the same server. This enables IP reputation protection so that one

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"Hurricane MTA Server has significantly improved our email delivery performance. In addition, the advanced reporting and logging features in Hurricane MTA Server have reduced the time required to investigate deliverability issues by at least 50 percent."

Christopher Harris, Email Specialist Blackbaud

Blackbaud ®

Industry
Email Service Provider

Key Benefits
-Improved deliverability to the large ISPs
-Integration with in-house Windows based applications
-Real-time insight into email delivery
-Improved insight into email delivery trends and problem resolution

Product
-Hurricane MTA Server

Development Environment
- Microsoft Windows .NET

customer's email doesn't adversely affect another's, as well as the ability to report email delivery statistics on a customer-by-customer basis. Hurricane MTA Server's account structure provides Blackbaud the ability to create separate accounts (Virtual MTAs) for each customer or groups of customers. Each account has its own unique settings and can be monitored independently from each other. Reporting can be now broken down by account so that delivery trends and potential problems can be spotted quickly.

Integration

The ability to integrate the MTA with its website management and on-line marketing solution, Blackbaud NetCommunity, was a key capability for Blackbaud. Being able to automate the provisioning process for new customers and being able to gather delivery statistics for customers and individual email campaigns would greatly improve efficiencies in bringing new customers online and enhance their service to include customer specific statistics on their email campaigns. This is achievable through Hurricane MTA Server's Web Services interface and .Net API. Through these interfaces Blackbaud can tightly integrate the MTA with its existing system to provide an enhanced solution to customers.

Reporting

Effective reporting on email activity provides two keys things for Blackbaud; the ability to provide statistical data on email delivery to its customers and the ability to identify problems and resolve them quickly. Hurricane MTA Server provides Blackbaud a comprehensive set of built-in reports for views into Inbound, Injected, Outbound, Failed and Bounced messages over time. Blackbaud can also access this data through the Web Services interface and store it within its own database to provide customer access to the report data.

Conclusion

Blackbaud's desire was to replace its existing MTA with an enterprise solution that was scalable to meet the company's growing business needs, that would integrate with its in-house applications and was a native Windows solution, was realized in choosing Hurricane MTA Server. Through the deployment of Hurricane MTA Server, Blackbaud has been able to significantly increase delivery throughput through Hurricane MTA Server's built-in deliverability features and increased operating efficiencies through its easy-to-use web console and reporting features.