Computer Professionals International
Technology Solutions Experts

A CPI White Paper
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Computer Professionals International
The Value Proposition for Information Technology Proactive
Services for Financial Services Organizations

Disclaimer

The following is intended to outline our general methodology regarding the IT Pro-active service offering. It is intended for information purposes only, and may not be applicable to all clients. It is not a commitment to deliver any material or functionality. The IT Pro-active offering for Financial Service organizations is a customizable service, unique to each individual client.

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Executive Summary

Financial services institutions have aggressively implemented technology as a means of competitive differentiation. In the process, they have amassed large IT departments and invested overwhelming resources to build custom solutions from the ground up. Managing the commoditized underlying infrastructure supporting theses services has become a burden that drains vital resources from strategic planning and delivery. In addition, ineffective upkeep of the various subsystems leads to challenges regarding audits and examination readiness.

IT Pro-active Services are a matrix of integrated offerings that provide a robust set of services for supporting the delivery of business applications and their underlying technologies in a secure, compliant fashion. These capabilities can range from system event monitoring and triage to complete end-to-end infrastructure support delivery.
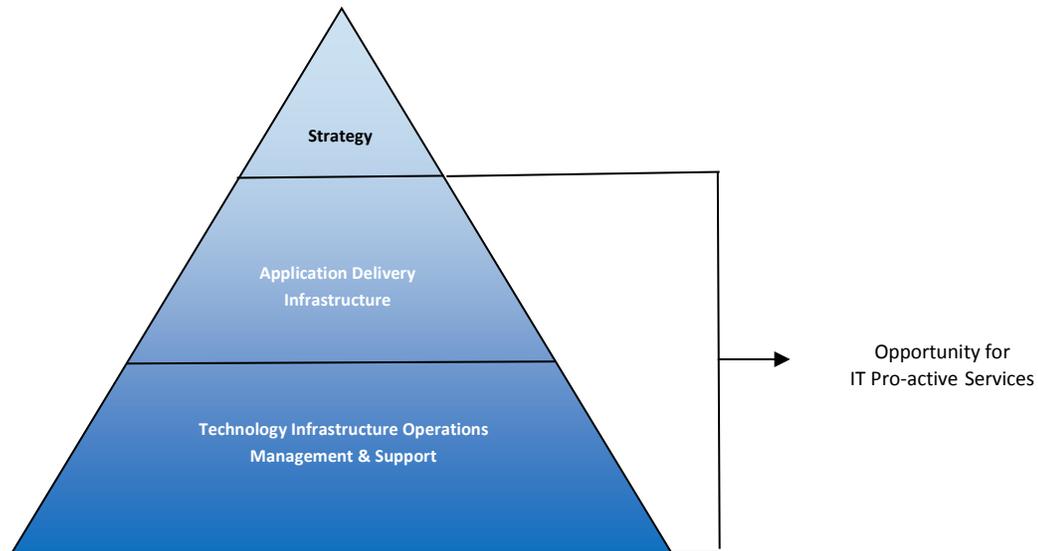
Savvy technology leaders looking to cut costs while improving stability, control and transparency of their IT infrastructure are turning to IT Pro-active Services as a solution. This suite of services empowers institutions to deliver predictable services at a predictable cost with continual improvements and proactive value add.

CPI has established one of Upstate New York's most comprehensive infrastructure management offerings that are designed specifically for financial services institutions. The offerings are provided by CPI's Advanced Systems Group (ASG). Several regional banks, community banks and credit unions are customers today.

This specific white paper is intended to illustrate the compelling value proposition of CPI's IT Pro-active Services for financial institutions. Throughout, this white paper will reference industry best practices for realizing the optimal benefits delivered by IT Pro-active services.

"Infrastructure management services can reduce labor costs by 10% to 50%, depending on the delivery location, resulting in a 3% to 30% overall net savings, excluding one-time transition charges."

Source: Gartner Cost Cutting in 2008 Using Remote Infrastructure Service Providers; By Richard T. Matlaus and William Maruer, 14 March 2008 ID Number G0015500

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                        Strategy

                  Application Delivery
                     Infrastructure                          Opportunity for
                                                          IT Pro-active Services

           Technology Infrastructure Operations
                 Management & Support
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The Challenge

To frame the discussion of how CPI can be of value to financial services institutions, we will review the various components of the IT Pro-active offering. Financial services institutions depend on their increasingly complex technology landscape to support and enable virtually all facets of their business. In order to remain competitive, firms desire to improve functionality and availability while also optimizing performance and costs.

The primary goal is to provide customer-centric solutions that drive productivity while keeping critical components safe and secure. Since all clients are unique, the IT Pro-active Services are designed based on the size and technical capability of each individual institution, this is not a one size fits all offering!

Any proactive service must empower organizations to gain a competitive advantage through IT that is measurable and cost effective. A one dimensional homogenous solution will not accomplish this objective.

Business Drivers for IT Pro-active Services

Cost Reduction	• Reduced manpower, performance efficiency and capacity planning to achieve reductions in cost
Focus on Competitive Advantage	• More free time to adopt technology for competitive advantage and increased market share while "keeping the lights on"
Quality and Process	• Process-based approach to problem solving, escalation, ensures adherence to standards and security controls
Automation	• Leveraging of automation tools can drive cost savings and improve system availability
Best Practices	• Adoption of industry best practices will result in efficiencies
Expertise	• Access to subject matter experts who will aid the organization in skill development
Risk Mitigation	• Improved risk-mitigation, assured business continuity, minimized downtime and security of client data
Scalability	• Absorption of the manpower peaks and valleys commonly found in operation frameworks
Visibility	• Timely reporting for greater visibility, real time control and historical trends
Service Levels	• Establish critical service levels for performance measurements, tracking and reporting
Preemptive Problem Resolution	• Through proactive monitoring and event correlation

Organizations continue to search for ways to free themselves from daily data center and infrastructure support so that they can focus on core capabilities of maximizing customer value through their specialized knowledge and offerings for target markets.

Often times determining the current state of the infrastructure can be a challenge upon itself. Attempting to develop an initial baseline which leads to a gap analysis is a time consuming process which may never get on the schedule. Developing a strategic plan with desired capabilities cannot occur until the baseline assessment and gap analysis have been developed and analyzed.

The Solution

The CPI IT Pro-active Services for Financial Services Organizations addresses the challenges discussed above. Our IT Pro-active provides both data center and network infrastructure support along with administration services all with a keen insight on information security.
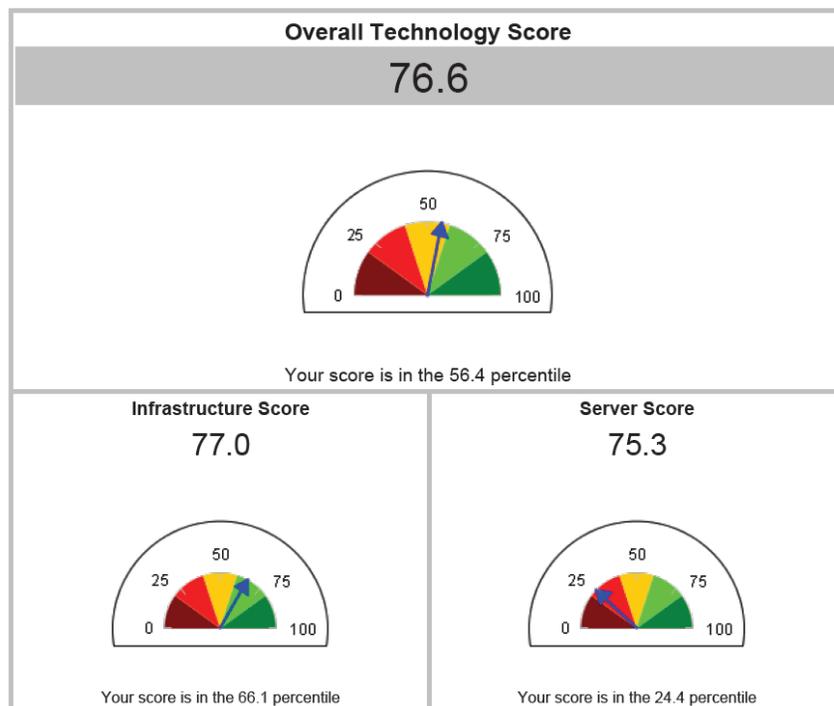
To promote success, the CPI team works closely with the client to identify individual goals that will maximize customer value.

IT Pro-active Service Components

As previously stated in this white paper, the IT Pro-active service is not a one-dimensional, homogeneous offering, it is a customizable offering unique to each client based on a proven methodology framework implementing various components. An overview of these offerings is as follows:

Network Health Check/Assessment

It is crucial to gain a solid understanding of the current network environment to develop a baseline used to measure success. CPI achieves this through a network health check utilizing data gathering tools licensed for this purpose. Our Health Check assessments utilize advanced data collection engines to identify key problems and opportunities for improvement in an IT environment. This initial evaluation of the environment reviews many aspects of the current infrastructure including network utilization, bandwidth contention, asset lifecycle and other critical criteria. By doing this, a comprehensive analysis of the overall state of the IT environment can be made and easily compared. The scores provided also contain the relative percentile ranking against all other assessments performed to provide a solid comparison as to how your IT ranks against others. The end result is a base line report with a "score" that is based on thousands of other similar assessments. This report serves as the building block of the service, allowing for development of an initial gap analysis report and remediation plan. An added value is the "dashboard" nature of the executive overview, ideal for demonstrating value to non-technical senior management teams.

Overall Technology Score

76.6

Your score is in the 56.4 percentile

Infrastructure Score

77.0

Your score is in the 66.1 percentile

Server Score

75.3

Your score is in the 24.4 percentile

NOTE: The technology scores above are based on a 100 point scale.

The Network Health Check/Assessment helps improve the reliability, scalability, and performance optimization of your network. Some of the areas that are analyzed include:

Feature	Benefit
Summary of Devices	Discovery of all network devices insures that IT assets are tracked and documented as a complete component inventory report
Device Lifecycle	Determine when devices will no longer be supported allowing planning for capital expenditures, eliminating surprises
Performance Analysis	Determine where issues exist including high utilization, packet loss, latency, etc., reducing the time and cost associated with traditional troubleshooting
Business Intelligence	Assists in the preparation of upgrades, migrations and planning for the future by identifying potential performance and scalability deficiencies

Monitoring and Alerting

As financial institutions have become more reliant on technology to meet the expectations of their customers network availability is essential. Access to information must be readily available anytime from anywhere on any device. In order to insure this high availability requirement organizations need to be aware of potential issues before they occur. CPI helps banks and credit unions achieve this objective through our remote monitoring and alerting service. Our hybrid agentless cloud based platform monitors and manages all local and cloud IT infrastructure and applications, including the full range of mobile devices, from a single unified web-based dashboard with powerful automation and collaboration features to help manage the end-to-end IT user experience.

The monitoring and reporting service manages thousands of devices from over one hundred manufactures spanning production servers (Windows, Linux), network devices (routers, switches, load balancers, etc.) databases (Oracle, SQL), SANs, security devices and VMware components.

All of this is being monitored 24 x 7 allowing organizations to proactively identify warning signs and small problems before they result in expensive system downtime. In conjunction with our customer support center (CSC) alerts can be categorized by degree of severity, insulating the financial institutions IT staff from reacting to non-critical alerts that do not require attention. The client has the option of receiving notification of alerts based on predefined criteria.
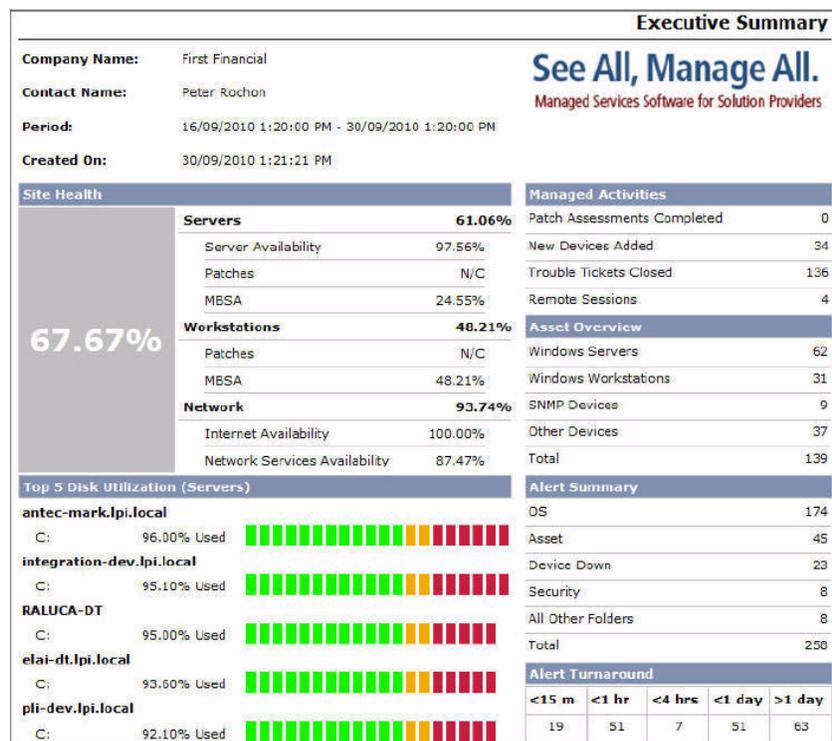
Patch Management

Once the baseline has been identified, a gap analysis reviewed, remediation tasks completed and remote monitoring implemented, the next challenge is keeping systems in compliance. The importance of this task cannot be understated as the security of your client's personal information is potentially at stake. A vital component of this objective is patch management. For the purpose of this white paper, the terms patch management and updates are synonymous.

Patch management involves acquiring, testing and installing updates on a managed device. The goal of patch management is to create a consistently configured environment that is secure against known vulnerabilities in operating systems and application software. By using patch management you can:

- Control updates to Microsoft applications and operating systems
- Increase security on the client-side network against known vulnerabilities in operating system and application software
- Ensure standard patch levels across managed systems
- Automate the updates to ensure security

Patch management can be fully automated, or set up so that controls ensure patches are tested in a non-production environment before approving them. The IT Pro-active service assists organizations in making this determination.

Security

An ancillary service associated with the IT Pro-active offering is the IT Pro-secure. CPI has an established, comprehensive approach to assisting customers with the ongoing testing and maintenance of deployed network security mechanisms. The goal of this approach is to ensure that the security is properly tested and maintained on a routine basis, with a full audit trail of the results and changes to the environment.   The IT Pro-secure includes the following components:

- On a scheduled basis, a CPI Security Engineer will be on site to perform a series of tasks.   During these visits a detailed report of the actions taken will be completed along with an evaluation of the security systems, recommendations for changes or improvements, and a review of the security logs
- Perform tests with a security scanner and other relevant testing utilities to test network security, password security, wireless, etc.
- Test will also be run to check firewall vulnerabilities
- Compile reports and discuss vulnerabilities
- Update code on all relevant security equipment: Firewalls, Routers, IPS, etc.

Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity

The final component of any IT Pro-active solution is a solid disaster recovery and/or business continuity plan. The traditional means of achieving this requirement was based purely on backup and recovery solutions, often times using removable media such as tapes. With compliance regulations requiring organizations to provide clients access to their information and assets (money) in a predetermined timeframe (SLA), that model is no longer sufficient. Organizations must plan for worst-case scenarios and develop contingencies to restore operations rapidly. A myriad of decisions must me made including prioritizing critical business applications, determining how these critical applications will be replicated and to where (company owned DR site, hosted colocation facility, private cloud, public cloud, hybrid cloud). Is there a requirement for removable media? What are the recovery time objectives (RTO) and recovery point objectives (RPO)? Can existing wide area network (WAN) links support the requirements in the defined timeframe? Is redundancy required in the WAN infrastructure? CPI helps institutions create and deploy DR/BC strategies.

One the business continuity strategy has been deployed, ongoing monitoring and verification becomes part of the IT Pro-active service offering. The support team monitors replication service time windows, verification of snapshots and backups, and monitors available disk space on the backup target devices. Test restores are also performed on a regularly scheduled basis.

The end result is a comfort level that when a disaster occurs, the financial services organization will be well positioned to meet or exceed any service level agreements that are in place.

Realizing the Value of IT Pro-Active Services

To gain market share and improve customer service, financial services institutions must embrace emerging technologies. They must choose the right solutions and deploy them wisely. Financial services institutions are often faced with making a decision to either "keep the lights on" or focus on strategic revenue producing growth initiatives. The IT Pro-active offering allows them to this by initiating a relationship with a partner that can take on the onus of maintaining current systems in a proactive manner with a keen eye on security, thus empowering firms to focus their time and energy on increasing their competitive advantage. In essence, clients are freed to focus on high value activities while CPI handles the day to day repetitive tasks.

Because all financial services institutions are different, the IT Pro-active support team is designed to manage heterogeneous implementations of any size continuously and proactively. Customers think of the CPI IT Pro-active service organization as a team of professionals small enough to ensure focus and attention, but large enough to leverage its experience and economies of scale by right-sizing custom solutions for each client.

In today's economy financial institutions must maximize customer value while tightly managing costs. IP Pro-active can be the strategic catalyst that enables IT to gain a competitive advantage: improve efficiency, effectiveness and agility of IT services. It is about doing more with less.

IT Pro-active is a way to deliver significant near term cost reductions as well as repositioning IT as a business enabler for future growth, rather than putting out fires. By offloading the day to day tactical operational responsibilities, financial services institutions are able to redeploy their valuable IT skills to focus on higher value activities supporting strategic initiatives as determined by the senior management team. It is important to note that this kind of activity generally results in greater job satisfaction for IT team members often resulting in intangible downstream retention benefits.

About CPI

Computer Professionals International is a technology services provider that has been helping organizations solve complex business problems through the use of technology for over thirty years. Headquartered in Schenectady, NY, our parent company, Astria Solutions Group, also includes docStar, a company that provide enterprise content management solutions and document management software. We are proud to have been selected a 2013 "Best Places to Work" company by the *Albany Business Review.* CPI delivers robust infrastructure management solutions based on industry best practices, comprehensive automation tools, and extensive experience working with financial services institutions. It is our goal to have every single client engagement end with them saying "Wow that was a fantastic experience!"

Contact Us

To learn more about other companies have achieved the results described in this document, please visit our website www.comproinc.com or contact me at:

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