

Imanami provides solid foundation for Identity Management in medium size organizations

Grant Thornton 

"Imanami helps Grant Thornton meet our goal of benefiting people - our own valuable staff - without increasing the IT budget,"

*Dave Johnson
Vice President of IT
Grant Thornton*

The company: Grant Thornton

Grant Thornton LLP is the U.S. member firm of Grant Thornton International, one of the six global accounting, tax and business advisory organizations. Through member firms in 110 countries, including 51 offices in the United States, the partners of Grant Thornton member firms provide personalized attention and the highest quality service to public and private clients around the globe.

The Challenge

One of the largest accounting firms in the world, Grant Thornton has experienced significant growth recently, seeing a 30 percent revenue growth over the last three years coupled with a 25 percent increase in staff. This growth, however, was coming at a price for the IT and HR departments. These departments were saddled with the responsibility of manually managing identity management projects - creating accounts for new hires in the company's HR and IT directories associated with the company's rapid expansion. This meant they had to enter relevant data related to every new hire and share it with the appropriate IT department within the network of 51 Grant Thornton offices to make sure the new hires were given passwords and email accounts. Ditto for eliminating employees when they left the organization. To address identity management, Grant Thornton was relying on homegrown visual basic tools that required staffers to devote much of their time to manual account creation and HR database maintenance. With this approach to identity management, new account creation for one new hire took up to an hour and a half.

"It was a two week process to create an account for a new hire but we would get late notifications asking for an account within 24 hours," said Dave Johnson, vice president of information technology for Grant Thornton. "A lot of times, new hires were just sitting around doing nothing for two weeks because they did not have a computer, email account and network password. We needed to address this issue because it was becoming costly to the company."

With the daily responsibility of company directory data entry resting squarely with HR and IT, the few inevitable data entry mistakes became recurring problems throughout the databases as staff had to later track them down and rectify them.

Grant Thornton realized that they needed a better alternative to their inefficient method of manually carrying out identity management. Moreover, they had to find an automated, cost effective solution to support growth without expanding the IT budget. Enter Imanami. After creating a list of internal criteria for potential identity management vendors and evaluating six different solutions, Grant Thornton decided on Imanami's Directory Transformation Manager (DTM) as the clear winner. Imanami's solution was the most cost-efficient, effective, and easy-to-deploy. Moreover, other solutions, unlike Imanami, sought to burden Grant Thornton with months of costly "consulting" to train staff and deploy their products.

Imanami Directory Transformation Manager

Grant Thornton uses Imanami's Directory Transformation Manager to synchronize databases and create new accounts from the HR system. The deployment of Imanami was simple - it took a matter of hours - not weeks or months, to set up and train staff on the intuitive DTM application, requiring no training classes.

DTM synchronizes most databases and identity stores on the Microsoft Active Directory server, turning it into an authoritative repository for identity information. DTM provides the capability for provisioning and de-provisioning, or adding and deleting employees, and can map business processes to automation. DTM is also utilized as a simple cleanup tool to gain accuracy and consistency within the directory.

"Before Imanami we provisioned 50 new employees a day but now using Imanami we can do 1,000 employees a day," said Johnson. "We calculated 86 hours saved on the creation of 172 new accounts. Frankly, at this rate, Imanami will pay for itself in three months."

DTM's preview feature allow job previews to see what would change in a target system prior to running a job to ensure it would meet a project's desired goals. In addition, the DTM Console gives a bird's eye view of DTM jobs including information on when they will run, when they last run, and how many objects were updated, created, deleted or unchanged. To complete the process, an email notification is sent when a job has run.

The automatic email notification of a new hire has proven helpful and time-saving time for both HR and IT at Grant Thornton. Once a new hire is entered into the database, the IT department receives an immediate notification, allowing new hires to be directly provisioned, rather than waiting for HR's notification to get started.

Grant Thornton also discovered different uses for the product including using DTM as a security tool. DTM allows simultaneous HR and Active Directory account termination to make sure users no longer have access to email or the network sever once they have left the organization. As Grant Thornton continues to deploy DTM, they are discovering new ways to utilize it. At the moment, they are considering it for international directory synchronization and to power employee transfers between offices.

Benefit to Grant Thornton

Overall, Imanami has helped Grant Thornton fulfill its promise to its employees by making new hires feel welcome from day one. On their first day of work, new employees are greeted with all of the appropriate network passwords, are entered into all relevant directories, and have an email account waiting.

Not to mention, with the efficiencies Imanami brings, Grant Thornton conveys its professional image to new employees from the moment they begin working. Gone are the days of employees potentially waiting days or weeks to become fully provisioned into the company and begin work in earnest.

"DTM's capabilities are limitless, as much as you can dream. In fact, we may tackle our international databases next with the product. Simply, the feedback from staff regarding Imanami has been overwhelming positive."

*Dave Johnson
Vice President of IT
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