

Background

Clal Insurance, Pension and Finance group is part of the IDB Group (one of Israel's largest and most influential conglomerates). IDB holds 57% of its shares; while 10% are held by Bank Hapoalim (Israel's largest bank) and 33% are held by the public. Clal's shares are traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. The group has a 23% share of the insurance market and manages more than NIS 150 billion of assets.

Haim Inger is the CTO of Clal Systems Ltd which manages IT operations for the Clal Group. Mr Inger was appointed to this role in mid 2008 following a career of almost 25 years in IT for various Israeli vendors and system integrators.

The situation before eyeShare

One of the main problems that Mr Inger observed when taking over at Clal, was the amount of knowledge about operational recovery procedures that was stored in people's heads, rather than in any accessible repositories, and this was a major concern as it caused all sorts of time delays and disruptions when live systems failed and needed recovery. The Clal web Portal based on Broadvision which supports thousands of insurance agents and other key users was particularly vulnerable to this issue and typical recovery times were felt to be far too long. The users of the portal were inconvenienced and probably this was leading to a loss of business and low user satisfaction.

Prior to being aware of eyeShare, Mr Inger tried to solve the recovery time issue in several ways trying different types of technologies including using MS Visio to document operational procedures and then handing those over for operations to follow. But the attempts to improve recovery times kept failing until finally Clal turned to eyeShare in 2008.

eyeShare solution to the Business Service issue

During a short Proof of Concept (PoC) Clal were able to implement the Visio procedures directly into eyeShare workflows, and to create alerts when the Portal failed, in such a way that SMS messages sent to the responsible operator were able to be replied to from his mobile phone, without him having to take the time to log in and do other manual activities. The reply to the SMS triggered a totally automatic recovery of the Portal.

The end result of this improvement was a major reduction in Portal down time. Mr Inger says "Once we started using eyeShare for Portal system recovery, the response time to handle this process fell by over 90% and we feel that we have reduced our lost business and also created happier end users".

In addition, Mr Inger adds “the people previously involved in manual recovery of the Portal are now free to work on other more valuable tasks and all systems recovery knowledge is encapsulated in the eyeShare active repository and workflows. This means that we are no longer dependent on the availability of certain people to perform these critical recovery tasks which sometimes happen during unsocial time periods when those people are sleeping or otherwise unavailable”.

Clal are now in the second stage of eyeShare implementation and are moving more systems & more people over to be managed by automated recovery workflows.

The second main implementation – key user file data collection

The next system implemented was a key file data collection system (CyberArk) that receives important nightly business to business files from insurance agents, banks and other Clal business partners. Prior to the eyeShare implementation, this system often was prone to failures due to; files not arriving on time, manual operator errors in running the file update runs and this was because the entire process was managed manually using laminated Run Books rather than in any automatic way. As a result, files were picked up from previous days, or not processed at all, causing business disruption and user unhappiness. In addition, developers who came in the next morning to “clean up” these errors were faced with trawling through volumes of reports and logs to figure out what had happened, causing further delays and also causing a loss of IT productivity.

Once this system was automated using eyeShare workflows and alerting, all the issues associated with manual errors were eliminated and the entire work process of handling the files is automated with alerts on an exception basis to the right person at the right time. For example, if a file is missing, it is detected by eyeShare before the evening deadline and an appropriate person is alerted by SMS or email to call the bank or agent to try to get the file over before the run deadline. This improves user quality of service and ensures that daily business revenue is maximized.

In addition, both operators and developers are freed from needless work that is all handled automatically by eyeShare workflows that take care of the process and only alert the appropriate exceptions for manual intervention. When developers come in the next morning they now only have to deal rapidly with a few exceptions, and this has improved their productivity significantly too, freeing them up for more new application development work results of saving one man year for that process only.

The future – all systems will be wired to eyeShare before going into production

Mr Inger explains: “I decided as a result of this success, to make a policy that all new systems would be implemented on eyeShare prior to going into production, and that I would no longer accept manual laminated Run Books”. There was initially resistance to this change from the application development teams, but once they saw the benefits that could be gained from doing this, they became significant converts to using eyeShare for the automation of all system incident handling. The reasons were clear, according to Mr Inger “Development teams realized that they would be far less disturbed after a system is implemented if all the recovery work is handled by eyeShare. They won’t be woken up at unsocial times to sort out issues and are much more able to focus on productive new development”.

Dashboards to keep an eye on everything

Clal also implemented the eyeShare dashboard capabilities so that Mr Inger and other senior Clal management can see “at a glance” what is happening at an overall level in the activities of all mission critical systems and any alerts and failures that are being handled by the eyeShare system.

Mr Inger says “The unique capability of eyeShare dashboards tells me who has been working on a critical issue, how long they have taken and allows for timely escalation, making for a much smoother operational environment. I and my IT management colleagues have full visibility and we are able to contact IT users whether internal or external and assure them that we are on top of the situation and when we expect things to be back to normal”. This proactive approach has dramatically improved end-user satisfaction with IT services at Clal and has enhanced the reputation of Clal Systems within the Clal Group.

About Ayehu

Ayehu Software Technologies Ltd : Ayehu was founded in 2007 to develop and market innovative solutions for the prevalent and costly problem of network and IT system downtime, eyeShare™, Ayehu’s flagship product, is the first end-to-end CSM Solution. Based on a novel and patented process eyeShare™ ensures business resilience, availability and reliability and improves MTTR.

eyeShare™ is designed to automate the business of operations and proactively reduce or potentially prevent process inefficiencies.

