Liquidity Services Case Study

UpGuard

Summary

Company Background

Dealing with surplus capacity—especially at the modern scale of production—is a challenge common to every manufacturing business. Liquidity Services Inc. streamlined the process and brought surplus management into the 21st century. With over one billion dollars in sales annually, the company is now considered the gold standard of effective reverse supply chain management.

The Challenge

Founded in 1999, Liquidity's rapid success was the result of applying information technology to a problem integral to supply chain management. That approach gave them a competitive advantage, but it also introduced the problems common to all IT environments. As Liquidity prepared for a data center migration, they knew they needed to audit their farm of Linux servers, not only to ensure a successful migration but to pay down technical debt.

The Solution

Approximately one hundred servers powering multiple applications were in scope for the migration. First, Liquidity used UpGuard's baseline configuration discovery to understand what packages and files were on each server. Next, they used UpGuard's logical categorization to group nodes that served like functions based on the resources present on those nodes. Those groupings provided the basis for meaningful comparisons between the member nodes. The findings from those comparisons were then handed off to the teams responsible for the assets for consultation on how the servers should be configured. Finally, that desired state was turned into executable documentation for pre- and post-migration checks to ensure that each group was ready for migration and stood up correctly afterwards.

Liquidity Services Summary

Industry

Surplus Management

Challenges

Configuration drift, Data center migration, Organic growth, Cross-functional collaboration

Solutions

Baseline configuration discovery, IT procedure automation

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David Emerson

Senior Director of Engineering, Liquidity Services

Results

"We used UpGuard because it was an easily-delegated, easily-deployed product which did what we needed it to do," said David Emerson, Liquidity's Senior Director of Engineering. "We simply had UpGuard audit the environments. In this manner, we could present the differences to the users and ask them to remediate them before complaining about consistency."

Typically, configuration audits like the one performed at Liquidity would take days or weeks of capturing information through shell scripts, analyzing it in spreadsheets, and returning to the affected machines to verify the findings. WIth UpGuard, conducting the initial assessment of configuration drift took minutes. Better yet, the heatmap visualization made the data collected instantly comprehensible. The Operations and Development teams had a shared source of truth in the UpGuard console, avoiding conflicts over methodology and allowing for easy hand offs of findings. Differences were thus discovered, prioritized, and either waived or remediated.

Every business with a significant IT organization knows that any configuration anomaly is just another opportunity for something to go wrong. That kind of uncertainty can be a showstopper any given day of the year, but knowing a migration was on its way, Liquidity took no chances with their business-critical systems. For both configurations that had no drift and for those they remediated, the Liquidity teams created UpGuard policies to bring their systems under management as test-driven infrastructure.

As an added benefit, using UpGuard has led Liquidity's team to look into using automated build and deploy technology to further streamline their workflows: "UpGuard delivered on what we needed it for, the above environmental audit matter. It identified significant gaps in our processes between developers, and incentivized the introduction of automated environment build and deploy features, which had previously been disregarded."

UpGuard™

Businesses depend on trust, but breaches and outages erode that trust. UpGuard is the world's first cyber resilience platform, designed to proactively assess and manage the business risks posed by technology.

UpGuard gathers complete information across every digital surface, stores it in a single, searchable repository, and provides continuous validation and insightful visualizations so companies can make informed decisions.

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