

# Agricultural giant selects VMware Service Manager for ITSM across its international network



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– Bill Weimer  
Manager of the VMware Service Manager for ADM

## Archer Daniels Midland

Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM), formed in 1923, is a leading global agricultural company engaged in procuring, transporting, storing, processing, and merchandising agricultural commodities and products.

Based in Illinois, USA, ADM employs more than 264,000 people across six continents. The company has 268,270 domestic and international processing plants and a worldwide transportation network.

ADM staff around the world report IT problems in the first instance to their local (national) service desk. These service desks refer some problems on to ADM's U.S. headquarters, but are otherwise self-reliant.

ADM had a requirement for an IT service management system that could be used company-wide across its substantial network of international plants and offices. The company wanted a central repository of information (i.e., a single database) for reporting and knowledge sharing that accommodated time and language differences and gave regional service desks an uncluttered view of their own data.

ADM's existing support system had been developed in-house, using Microsoft® Outlook®. In addition to operational problems such as job tickets becoming lost, the system was no longer compatible with the company's preferred IT strategy. ADM also wanted a system that had the potential to be extended beyond its IT service desk use—in other words, that provided maximum flexibility into the future.

ADM evaluated five enterprise-level, service management systems, finally selecting the VMware Service Manager, a fully web-based application from VMware. Rolling out a single system across such a large and dispersed number of locations was potentially a huge logistical, as well as very costly challenge. For this reason, the VMware Service Manager's fully web-based architecture was a key reason for its selection as it enabled the system to be installed on a single database in ADM headquarters and run across the Internet to the company's international locations.

"The other major requirement met by the system was the ability to easily obtain a high level of visibility of the entire global service desk operation through centralized reporting and other management features," says Bill Weimer, Manager of the VMware Service Manager for ADM.

The ADM IT department in Decatur has been using the VMware Service Manager system since the first phase of its rollout. Phase 2 included adding support officers in South America. This number will increase as the system is progressively deployed, with the third phase adding support officers in Europe.

### A partitioned database accommodates regional differences

ADM has partitioned the VMware Service Manager system to protect the integrity of each international work unit's unique data set, including client and call history, while still providing access to common problem types and knowledge.

At corporate headquarters, Weimer can view and run reports on all data within the system, while service desk operators within a particular region will see only their own local data.

“We initially tested the system with four partitions,” says Weimer. “One each for the U.S., South America, Europe, and a group at corporate headquarters who wanted to evaluate the system for its suitability for non-IT service desk purposes. The feedback was that it met each group’s needs perfectly. We then went ahead and rolled out the live system in the U.S., then South America, with plans for a staged rolling out of the product to Europe. We allowed five days for the initial implementation and got it done in two. After using it for several months, we added partitions for South America and Europe.”

### **Implementation in Brazil**

Weimer travelled to Brazil to train the local service desk on the VMware Service Manager system and assist in the setup for their partition. That implementation provided the template for its subsequent expansion to other countries.

ADM’s Brazilian operation consists of a number of locations, some remote, which access the VMware Service Manager system through the web via dial-up modem, a capability that has surprised and pleased the local offices.

Partitioning has enabled the Brazilian service desk to record regional Incident and Problem data in the Portuguese language. The html-based screens give them the ability to customize the screens to show all labelling in Portuguese. In addition, the time-zoning in the system enables Brazil to view dates and times in local time, as well as giving realistic service-level calculations.

### **Central control and reporting**

It is imperative for the company to maintain hands-on control of its systems. In fact, it was one of the application’s selling points. As the requirements on the system grow and change, ADM can independently create its own customizations, including custom reporting through Crystal Reports.

“We run a lot of reports out of the system and have come to love and depend on Crystal,” says Weimer. “The reports are mostly run end of month to see how many Incidents and Problems we have, what type they are, and how they are broken down by group and location. The reports have been essential in helping to identify areas where we need training or need to update part of the network infrastructure.”

For a realtime view of current service desk activity, Weimer uses the VMware Service Manager Monitor, which provides an instant graphical snapshot.

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