



SunTrust Banks Reaps Significant Benefits From OPNET Solutions

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Tim Baker

Manager

Network Planning and Engineering

SunTrust

Bank Reduces IT Costs and Enhances Application Availability

SunTrust leverages OPNET solutions to:

- **Achieve improvements in application response times**
- **Benefit from reliable and accurate predictions**
- **Save in annual data-network charges**
- **Accelerate application deployments**
- **Increase IT productivity through quick problem isolation and resolution**

SunTrust Banks, Inc., headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, is one of the nation’s largest commercial banking organizations with total assets of \$128.1 billion and total deposits of \$85.5 billion as of June 30, 2004. SunTrust offers a full line of consumer and commercial banking services to more than

5.5 million customers through

more than 1,200

branches and 2,200

ATMs across seven

states - Alabama,

Florida, Georgia,

Maryland, South Carolina,

Tennessee and Virginia as

well as the District of

Columbia. Its primary businesses

include traditional deposit and credit

services as well as trust and investment

services. Through various subsidiaries

SunTrust provides credit cards, mortgage

banking, insurance, brokerage and capital

market services.

Helping Achieve “One Bank” Success

SunTrust’s “One Bank” IT initiative included consolidating more than 100 applications from disparate IT systems into one system. A primary benefit was providing customers the ability to uniformly conduct banking transactions – such as accessing account information or cashing a check – anywhere in the SunTrust system.

The IT team at SunTrust was aware that these applications would fundamentally alter the way their current network infrastructure was utilized. Prior to investing in OPNET solutions, SunTrust relied on trending approaches to assess network capacity needs. Given the wide-scale IT consolidation effort, it was immediately clear that trending based on historical data was inadequate.

OPNET solutions were used to create a baseline of the existing systems. The critical applications were profiled and the bandwidth requirements were analyzed. Several “what-if” scenarios were conducted to assess the cost-benefit of investing in an expensive Metro Area Network service versus a less expensive Frame Relay Service.

Based on OPNET results, SunTrust decided to leverage the existing network infrastructure that they currently had in place to support this project, and did not upgrade to a Metro service. “That decision directly translated into significant savings per month,” said Tim Baker, Manager of Network Planning and



Engineering – Mid-Atlantic Region. “Our current network is stable, and it is still supporting the additional traffic loads as predicted. OPNET’s predictions were on the mark and match the real-world conditions we see today.”

Increasing IT Productivity – Quick Resolution of Application Performance Problems

“Analyzing the performance of problematic applications used to be a time-consuming, laborious process,” recalls Tim Baker. “Prior to our work with OPNET, IT engineers spent a significant amount of time analyzing trace data and performance metrics, frequently arriving at different and conflicting conclusions on the cause of performance problems.”

SunTrust’s documenting application, LaserPro, was one such problematic application being used at a few regional locations. A specific LaserPro transaction was taking over 30 seconds to execute, and SunTrust’s IT team was working to resolve this problem. OPNET solutions were brought in to troubleshoot and help prepare for a smooth rollout of this application corporate-wide. OPNET’s ACE™ Analyst immediately diagnosed the performance problem. With the clear reports from ACE Analyst, the application developers fixed the problem rapidly, resulting in a 70% improvement in response time, from 30 seconds to 10 seconds.

“This was a huge success story -- especially since most end-users had become accustomed to the delay,” states Tim Baker. “The beauty of ACE Analyst is that it identifies the root-cause at the ‘get-go’ or it at least ‘zeroes-in’ on the specific areas that

SunTrust’s IT team needs to focus their efforts on. A tremendous time saver.”

Reducing IT Costs

SunTrust’s lending application “LEAD” is very network resource intensive since it incorporates imaging. During a re-location effort over 100 employees were to access “LEAD” from a new building, and SunTrust wanted to understand the impact of this deployment on the network in terms of the response times as well as network utilizations.

An important question for the IT team was if a change to SONET was required or if a Frame Relay upgrade was sufficient. Moving to SONET would require significant expenditures including construction and connectivity charges. OPNET’s IT Guru showed that the additional traffic could be supported by aggregating system bandwidth in SunTrust’s Frame Relay network with an additional cost of only \$1800 per month.

Conclusion

OPNET solutions are now included in SunTrust’s core IT management process. The bank is now implementing a “best practices approaches document” to ensure rapid troubleshooting and proactive planning for new application deployments. “We want to spend less time firefighting and spend more time focusing on SunTrust’s strategic business goals. OPNET is a key enabler in this transformation,” concludes Tim Baker.

**For more information,
please contact OPNET: info@opnet.com**

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