

Andover Controls use Open Minds to add High Availability to their Security management Systems



Today, temperature control and building control systems are far more sophisticated than ever before. The twin towers in Kuala Lumpur have one of the most sophisticated building control systems available. Using the latest technology to monitor temperature, alarms and building security – all totally integrated in one common user interface, it is possible to get a total view of the status of every device in the building. The hardware and software is supplied by Andover Controls.

Uptime is imperative

The data collected from the various devices is sent to and monitored in a SQL Server database. For such a sophisticated system of inter-related devices, uptime is imperative. Loss of the critical SQL Server database would result in the security of the whole building being compromised, the temperature control being delayed or, even worse, fire alarms not working correctly.

When Andover installs a system, their users want devices to be controlled as

close to real-time as possible. A very real scenario of a system going down and resulting in a delay of a few hours before the temperature is turned down, or a building security being compromised is a very serious consideration to their customers.

Without any sort of fault resilience, there would be a compromise in the critical delivery of information and data to the client system.

Working with OpenMinds, and using Lifekeeper Andover Controls have achieved :-

- higher hardware & software revenue per deal
- greater product diversity
- market differentiation
- greater customer satisfaction

Andover wanted to integrate high availability into their solution, but they did not want devote a large amount of resource to it. Their solution demanded a recovery solution that they wanted to address as quickly as possible. Open Minds worked with Andover to put together an initial prototype that integrated their hardware, Microsoft SQL Server and used LifeKeeper to failover when the primary system failed or was switched off. As a standard “application recovery kit” already existed for SQL server, the development time was kept to a minimum.

Worked First Time

The solution looked so encouraging (the first test managed to failover without losing any data, and the devices came up virtually immediately) that Andover decided they wanted to develop the idea of providing a highly available offering of their solution to their customers.

Andover knew what they wanted, but they also knew that they did not have the expertise to develop and deliver the highly available solution.

Open Minds worked with Andover to build a total package that they could sell. This involved working with the developers at Andover, testing the solution, educating their engineers to be able to install and configure the solution and providing sales training and support.

Off-site disaster recovery

Since these early beginnings, Andover Controls has incorporated ‘Highly Available’ versions of their product as a part of their offering. The fact that LifeKeeper sits behind their HA offering is almost invisible to their customers. There are also plans of developing an off-site disaster recovery solution, and implement an HA version of their Web Client software that uses Microsoft IIS.

Easier maintenance

As a side benefit, as there are now two servers capable of running the building systems, Andover and their customers have far greater flexibility in when they perform scheduled maintenance, including upgrades. Upgrades can take place on the “stand-by” box which is then swapped with “production”, meaning they can be scheduled to suit the technician, rather than being driven by the schedule of the building.

Business Advantage

By working with OpenMinds, with minimal financial or technical outlay, Andover Controls have achieved higher hardware & software revenue per deal, greater product diversity, market differentiation and greater customer satisfaction.

Andover’s customers get the additional security of protection from server and software failure, building their confidence in the Andover brand, already known for its product quality.