

## ORACLE'S SOFTWARE CONFIGURATION MANAGER HELPS BRUNSWICK BOAT GROUP MANAGE COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS



Brunswick Boat Group  
www.brunswick.com

### Industry:

Manufacturing

### Annual Revenue:

\$5.6 Billion

### Employees:

26,000

### Oracle Products & Services:

Oracle Premier Support  
Oracle E-Business Suite Financials  
Oracle Discoverer  
Oracle Application Server (9iAS)  
Oracle Database (7x-10G)  
Oracle Enterprise Manager (10G Grid Control)

### Key Benefits:

- Simplified configuration management from a personalized dashboard
- Time spent creating and managing Service Requests reduced by up to 70%
- Most Service Requests resolved 50% faster
- Enhanced patch management to proactively diagnose system health and critical issues
- Automated Healthchecks reduce time spent on researching applicable best practices
- Fewer Service Requests due to targeted, proactive General and Security Alerts

Few businesses can claim to have transformed themselves as often and as successfully as Lake Forest, Illinois-based Brunswick Corporation. From its humble start in a small Cincinnati, Ohio, workshop in 1845, when the fledgling enterprise was called the Cincinnati Carriage Making Company by its founder John Brunswick, the company has continually evolved by being innovative, versatile, and quick to seize opportunities. Today, Brunswick Corporation is a global market leader in the marine, fitness, bowling, and billiards industries. Brunswick Boat Group, which manufactures pleasure craft as a division of Brunswick Corporation, has been an Oracle customer since 1998, when it purchased its initial Oracle E-Business Suite Financials.

To support continued growth and progress, Brunswick Boat Group needed to control costs. "Oracle Premier Support, with its Software Configuration Manager, helped our small DBA staff to be more effective and productive by providing value-added proactive automated support," explains David McNish, Senior Oracle DBA, Oracle Database Management, Brunswick Boat Group. "Faster issue resolution and the ability to proactively prevent issues were the two most valuable benefits for us. From an IT perspective, and specifically for the Service Delivery Group, we needed cost containment, standardization, and consolidation. In business, time is money, so it is often the small, incremental improvements that really matter in the long run."

### A More Intelligent Way to Manage Complex Environments

Foremost among the proactive automated support capabilities offered to Oracle Premier Support customers, Software Configuration Manager provides a simpler way to track, manage, and support Brunswick Boat Group's Oracle configurations—in development, testing, and production modes. With it, Brunswick Boat Group is able to centrally view all of its configuration information along with the associated service requests, product alerts, and projects.

*“With the Software Configuration Manager’s new personalized dashboard, I can quickly drill into my service requests, patch advice, system Healthchecks, or knowledgebase solutions and immediately get the information I’m looking for.”*

David McNish,  
Senior Oracle DBA,  
Oracle Database  
Management,  
Brunswick Boat  
Group

“The new Software Configuration Manager dashboard is very refined and personalized and allows me to quickly find what I need to do,” says McNish. “Now, I simply log on to Oracle *MetaLink*, go to Software Configuration Manager, and everything is there for me. I can see specifically which Security and General Alerts pertain to our environments and all of our service requests by project.” This simplified view is just one of the enhanced features of Software Configuration Manager that Brunswick Boat Group relies on regularly.

### **Faster Problem Resolution for Higher System Availability**

With Software Configuration Manager enabled, the exchange of information between Brunswick Boat Group and Oracle’s support engineers is simplified and accelerated. Brunswick Boat Group also has a faster way to create and manage technical assistance requests and service requests. “With Software Configuration Manager, we can log TARs/SRs much more quickly, since the configuration for that database or application is already on file with Oracle Support,” says McNish. “Software Configuration Manager also helps to simplify how we track and manage our service requests within Oracle Support,” he adds. “It is helping us to reduce day-to-day maintenance tasks, allowing us to address our core business activities. It provides a significant time savings.”

### **Preventive, Proactive Issue Notification with Security Alerts and General Alerts**

Brunswick Boat Group also relies on the Security and General Alerts within Software Configuration Manager to help prevent issues from ever becoming Service Requests. Security and General Alerts are proactive, automated, secure notifications that inform Brunswick Boat Group about which patches and fixes to install to avoid exposure to risk. Such alerts are especially valuable to Brunswick Boat Group, which is continuing to transform itself on a global scale, because they ensure more efficient change management. “Prevention is difficult to measure, but we all know that avoiding service requests saves time,” says McNish. “Keeping our systems running efficiently helps our business remain competitive. Software Configuration Manager points out items that we might not have known needed attention, saving time we would have otherwise spent researching all the places where our databases were not in alignment with Oracle’s

suggested best practices. In the past, if Oracle realized that setting a specific configuration to a new value would improve performance or enhance security, we learned of it in an e-mail or at a seminar. Then we would have figured out how to report the current value across our various database versions and platforms. Time would have been spent making the changes and putting systems in place to monitor them. With Software Configuration Manager, all that effort is avoided. Software Configuration Manager checks those systems that should be checked and reports summarized findings on a dashboard. It is difficult to quantify the percentage of productivity improvement this offers us, but it has to be significant.”

### **Relying on Healthchecks for Optimized System Performance**

Solving issues before they become mission critical has kept Brunswick Boat Group’s systems consistently available and running at peak performance, even during high load periods. In particular, according to McNish, the Healthcheck feature of Software Configuration Manager has enabled his small DBA staff to easily and efficiently manage as many as 50 databases. “Healthcheck gives me Oracle’s recommended ‘best practices’ to optimize my system performance and reduce risk of down time,” which, he says, also allows his team to “significantly reduce costs.” Developed by Oracle’s most experienced engineers, HealthCheck identifies potential issues that may affect the overall stability, performance, and scalability of Oracle environments and informs customers of the risks associated with configuration-specific issues. Says McNish: “With the Software Configuration Manager’s new personalized dashboard, I can quickly drill into my service requests, patch advice, system Healthchecks, or knowledgebase solutions and immediately get the information I’m looking for.” He adds: “As a DBA before Software Configuration Manager existed, I had to research and learn all the best practices, which was very time consuming. Now, with Software Configuration Manager, I experience significant time savings, because it compares each of my environments against Oracle’s configuration best practices and Healthchecks and tells me instantly the key risks and recommendations.”

## Why Oracle?

One advantage of Oracle's complete Premier Support offering, including its Lifetime Support Policy, is clear to McNish: "We can remain on one release, knowing that Oracle will continue to provide ongoing updates and releases. This is key to our success and our decision to use Oracle. There is a degree of risk associated with frequently changing our environments, so we appreciate not being forced to upgrade to new releases." Oracle's Lifetime Support Policy is the industry's most flexible and comprehensive policy, and covers the entire technology stack of companies like Brunswick Boat Group—from database, to middleware, to applications. Knowing how long its Oracle technology will be supported has provided Brunswick Boat Group with a superior ownership experience, letting it plan its upgrade strategy in parallel with its business strategy.

## Implementation Process

Brunswick Boat Group has been an Oracle customer for nine years. It is currently running Oracle E-Business Suite Financials (versions 11 and 11i), over 50 databases with versions from 7.3.4 to 10.2.0.3, 9iAS, and OEM 10g Grid Control, on a variety of platforms: AIX, HP-UX, LINUX, and Windows Server. The databases support a number of third-party applications. Oracle E-Business Suite is its largest application, with up to 350 users. A third-party expense reporting application has more than 300 users. The remaining databases range from 2 to 70 users. Altogether, users are mainly decision-makers using E-Business Financials, Data Warehousing, and Engineering. For many in the finance group, Oracle is a key tool in their work. Financials is about 175G and grows about 2 to 3G per month.

David McNish, who is responsible for managing Brunswick Boat Group's Oracle infrastructure, led the installation of Software Configuration Manager. Oracle Support is significant to the Brunswick DBA team when they face difficult problems. They appreciate the 24/7 access and rely on the guidance and assistance they receive through Oracle Premier Support. Functional leads and subject matter experts turn to Oracle Support for the depth of its knowledgebase and the ease of its search capabilities. They proactively research how to make application configuration changes and to anticipate and measure their potential impact.