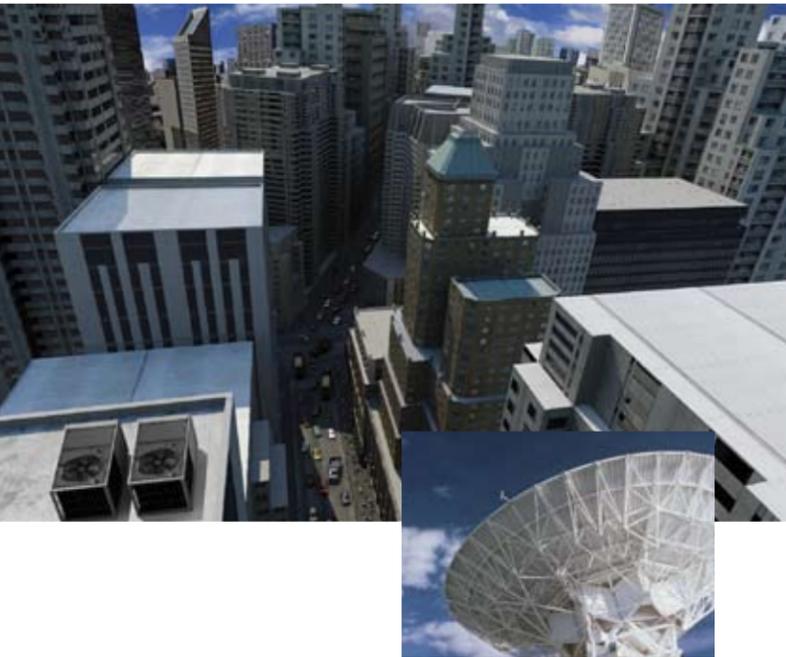


STARK DOMINATION

STARK INDUSTRIES POWERS INTO A NEW CORPORATE STRATEGY.



BY SCOTT SMITH

We no longer make weapons," Tony Stark declared in an internal memo to his Stark Industries executive staff last year.

Since then, the world's premiere futurist in the "Iron Man Age" of technology has been steeling himself for his biggest challenge yet—a heavy jolt of change. The tycoon-turned-superhero is busy transforming Stark Industries from a munitions manufacturer into a communications company.

Founded as an engineering and manufacturing firm that specialized in security measures, Stark Industries—then called Stark Enterprises—became a corporate superpower by developing munitions; it held that position by expanding into other fields including aeronautics, technology, and fringe science. Stark himself has undergone a crisis of conscience, causing him to rethink the kind of company he wanted to lead.

Since the "no more munitions" memo, the shift in corporate strategy has not gone entirely smoothly. Powerful political leaders have pressured Stark to turn over to the military the patents for his Iron Man armor technology. So

far, Stark has resisted these forces, but the organizational turnaround of Stark Industries may prove to be a job requiring even greater willpower.

Corporate transformations are difficult for large organizations because most companies operate with heterogeneous IT environments. These can be cumbersome, hindering the adaptability and responsiveness that leads to growth and innovation, and costly to operate. (Approximately 70 percent of an enterprise's IT budget is spent on maintaining existing systems; only 30 percent is earmarked for new capabilities.)

If Stark Industries hopes to break from these shackles, Tony Stark will need powerful partners willing to take ownership of these integration challenges. And like many CEOs in fast-moving companies, he is relying on an alliance with tech giant Oracle to ensure the demands on IT infrastructure are met with a swift and smooth implementation.

Oracle has the capacity to make this work. In addition to its powerful software technologies, the company has added

GETTING READY FOR STARK EXPO

Tony Stark is relaunching the Stark Expo, the trade show founded by his father. Its theme is "Better Living Through Technology," and like its counterpart, Oracle OpenWorld, Stark Expo is planned as a showcase of the triumph of ingenuity over the constraints of a data-driven world.

Oracle has officially signed on as the exclusive sponsor of the expo's Japanese Garden Pavilion, an East-meets-West exhibit of the latest innovations in green business practices. One thing is for sure: Stark will need Oracle Enterprise Manager to troubleshoot his systems throughout the trade show.

- Oracle Enterprise Manager can diagnose whether a system is buckling under the peak demands of a larger-than-expected opening day crowd and make rapid adjustments to resource allocation.
- To safeguard against attacks, Oracle Enterprise Manager senses whether the Stark Expo system is vulnerable to nefarious intruders and prevents unauthorized access to data and applications.
- Oracle Enterprise Manager can also determine when capacity is no longer being taxed and return all systems to their normal responsiveness and availability.

processing punch with Oracle Exadata Storage Server and most recently, hardware. This comprehensive "applications to disk" strategy gives Oracle's enterprise customers an entire technology stack (including applications, middleware, database, servers, storage, virtualization, and operating systems) combined with exceptional performance (by way of throughput, server, and storage speed enhancements).

Add to this lineup Oracle's suite of next-generation grid technologies and cloud computing solutions, and Stark Industries might just have the key components to exceed expectations.

The long-term success of Stark Industries will depend on Stark's ability to reduce complexity and increase efficiency in every corner of its operations. First, company engineers will need to harness the power of existing servers in a grid

computing architecture that allows them to scale resources to the demands of their workload. Once all corporate networks have been migrated to a virtualization model, Stark Industries will have the perfect foundation for a secure and lasting cloud infrastructure.

Finally, by implementing Oracle Enterprise Manager for system diagnostics and management, Stark Industries will have the only troubleshooting solution in the marketplace that monitors and configures server utilization across all physical, virtual, and private cloud computing environments.

"Technology becomes an extension of human performance," says Stark. ◀

Scott Smith is a senior writer with Oracle Publishing.

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