

# Lithium Technologies Leverages Centrify for End-to-End Identity Management, Compliance and Consistency



Founded in 2001 and headquartered in San Francisco, Lithium Technologies provides social customer experience management software that combines online customer community apps with traditional CRM business processes, resulting in a wide range of online customer interaction methods.



“The difference between our Mac reporting and auditing capabilities before and after Centrify is like night and day. Today, it’s entirely seamless and just like auditing any other system.”

**Don Small**  
Sr. Director of IT, Lithium Technologies



## The Challenge

Securely transition more than half the company’s employees to Mac systems. Achieve compliance to ISO 27001 and SOC 2 (SSAE 16) security standards. Simplify user access to systems and minimize the IT costs associated with password resets.

Just a few years ago, 75% of Lithium Technologies’ employees worked on PCs, while just 25% used Macs. But as their approach to product development evolved from Linux to Mac, the company rapidly transformed into a 75% Mac environment.

The problem was that, at the time, Mac users were operating outside the guidelines set forth in ISO 27001 and SOC 2 (SSAE 16) — security standards adopted by the company which include specifications for password management and security. “We had people getting access in a variety of different ways,” says Don Small, senior director of IT at Lithium. “Rather than centralizing logins to Macs via Active Directory accounts, users were getting access any way they could.”

Users typically had their own system passwords, but lacked a way to aggregate access into their primary machines. So even though they’d authenticate to their Macs using their local credentials, they’d still need to access a remote file server to authenticate using their Active Directory credentials. They were then required to provide additional credentials as they moved between systems and resources throughout the day. As a result, IT spent significant time and effort performing resets of forgotten passwords.

Since Mac users were directly authenticating to Active Directory, the company’s IT department couldn’t fully leverage Group Policy and was unable to provide Mac users with consistent support.

Because the ISO 27001 and SOC 2 compliance focused on Lithium’s production infrastructure which was initially PC-based, Mac access had not been included in these audits. But as more users transitioned to Macs, the situation called for a more universal and compliant solution to manage and secure the growing Mac environment.



## The Solution

Already using Centrify to manage back-end Linux systems, Lithium looked to Centrify Identity Service™ to provide end-to-end identity management. Product flexibility, ease of implementation and ease of use were deciding factors.

At the time, Lithium was using Centrify’s Server Suite® to manage Linux servers in its back-end infrastructure. “I had experience with Centrify from a previous company,” says Small. “I knew it was a solid solution that could be easily implemented without a lot of training or internal knowledge.”

In his previous company, Small had performed an evaluation of competitive solutions and found that many of them required extensive training and immersion prior to implementation.



"We use Centrify for security and compliance through end-to-end identity management — Server Suite for Linux servers on the back end and Identity Service for employees using Mac systems."

**Don Small**  
Sr. Director of IT, Lithium Technologies

"The flexibility of the Centrify solution was important to us. As we grow we'll require more functionality and scalability and we believe that Centrify will be able to address all of our needs well into the future."

**Don Small**  
Sr. Director of IT, Lithium Technologies

Taking into consideration ease of implementation, ease of set up and overall product flexibility, the decision was made to implement the Centrify Identity Service for internal Mac users.

To support his decision, Small put together a business case that included cost justification, detailed compliance requirements, and provided base projections of IT cost savings that would be achieved by decreasing the number of help desk calls for password resets.

"We performed the installation ourselves and it went very smoothly," says Small. "It's straightforward in terms of connecting to your Active Directory Group Policy and pointing it to the right defaults. But the greatest value was the ability to get all of our users accessing all of our systems in the same way. Consistency is essential from both a support and a security perspective."



## The Results

Help desk calls for password resets dropped by 80%, saving the company tens of thousands of dollars each year. Compliance to key industry standards was achieved. Reporting and auditing requirements were simplified and security improved significantly.

Small estimates that before the Identity Service for Mac solution, the IT department was receiving between 50 and 75 requests each week for password resets or assistance, at an approximate annual cost of \$128,000.

"One of the first things we saw with Centrify was a significant drop in the number of password reset calls," says Small. "We estimate the drop to be around 80%, so the return on investment was both significant and immediate. And that doesn't take into consideration the loss of productivity as users waited for assistance. Today every new Mac that goes out is imaged with Centrify."

Beyond the cost savings, Small points to Centrify as the solution that delivers end-to-end identity management across the company. "Centrify Server Suite manages the Linux systems in our datacenter, while the Identity Service manages our Mac users. Both need to follow policies, so for authentication we simply point them to our Active Directory Group Policies and that allows us to seamlessly manage policy enforcement across all machines."

The Group Policies within Active Directory are also helping to drive compliance to ISO 27001 and SOC 1. "Centrify has allowed us to comply with password complexity, repetition and frequency-of-change requirements. There's really no way to do that — or to even track it — without an aggregated authentication system," he said.

"Auditing and reporting have been simplified as well," Small says. "For the past three years we've met with the auditors. Every year they ask us to show them how our Macs are authenticating and we do. In a matter of minutes, everything is signed off and we're done. It's a very simple process."



Centrify strengthens enterprise security by securing identities from cyberthreats. Centrify uniquely unifies identity for privileged and end users across cloud, mobile and data center. Centrify improves security, compliance, agility and productivity for over 5000 customers, including over half of the Fortune 50 and over 80 federal agencies. [www.centrifly.com](http://www.centrifly.com).

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