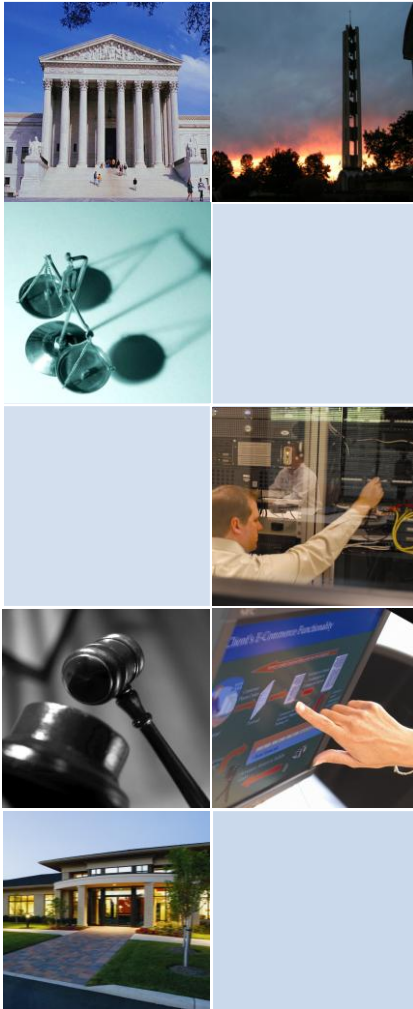




THE GREENTREE GROUP

The Competitive Edge Solution®



# Dayton Area Law Firm Takes Lemons and Makes Lemonade

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# Dayton Area Law Firm Takes Lemons and Makes Lemonade

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## Summary

In many small office environments employees frequently have multiple roles. Recently, The Greentree Group helped a law firm that specializes in prosecuting lemon laws. One of its firm's employees was the new client coordinator and also accomplished the daily IT duties. This employee had a strong, basic knowledge of information technology, but as often happens, she was soon spending an inordinate amount of time working on the office IT needs instead of fulfilling her primary role of new client coordinator. Greentree met with the staff member to assess the needs of the firm and to identify problem areas. After listening to the firm's problems and understanding their needs, Greentree's diagnosis showed the firm suffered from a slow network, bad data backup procedures, and problems with other software and vendors. The Greentree Group's solution was to perform multiple network upgrades (i.e. a new server), find a better backup solution and address the other software and vendor issues. As a result of Greentree's solution, the time the staff member spends managing the office network was significantly reduced allowing her to focus on her primary duties.

## Problem

Like other small companies, a law firm did not have an employee dedicated to managing the IT network. Network administration was delegated to a staff member as an additional duty. For several reasons, the employee ended up spending almost 75 percent of her time managing the network.

Although the employee had a strong basic IT knowledge, the firm hired a technology company to accomplish the more technical tasks, build a server and network all the computers. However, as the law firm's business grew, the staff member became overloaded with IT tasks. Adding new computers, new users and software to the network became more time consuming and beyond the employee's basic IT knowledge. Furthermore, the technology company was not providing the required support to keep the network operating efficiently.

The Greentree Group technicians met with the staff member to determine what was causing problems with the IT network. Greentree technicians learned that a majority of problems stemmed from the network server, backups, other software and services/vendors.

The server was not capable of supporting the law firm's business; it was vastly underpowered and overworked. The firm's mission-critical software and data had outgrown the server's capacity adding to the dilemma. These reasons alone made it difficult for the staff member to manage the network.

Also, backing up the server data was costly and time consuming because the firm was using an expensive and limiting data backup solution. In fact, some critical data was not being backed up at all. Documents were also stored on the desktop computers instead of the server, which put the data at risk since it was not backed up.



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Other problems stemmed from using incorrect software and hosted services. The firm had security issues because they could not update all computers with the latest security patches since there was no uniform patching or reporting software in place. The antivirus protection was out of date and a few systems did not have it installed. The firm was also using Outlook Express and downloading their emails through a hosted email website; consequently it could not centralize communication or manage their email accounts.

## Solution

After careful assessment of the current situation, Greentree formulated a complete solution that would focus the firm's IT on helping the firm reach its goals - - Because it's about your business... not technology! As a result the firm decided to overhaul the network. Wanting to establish a solid relationship with the firm as a trusted IT advisor, Greentree made certain the project was planned and executed to the highest standards.

The existing server's equipment was not suitable for business use. Greentree demonstrated the technology features in Windows Small Business Server 2003 and showed how much easier network management and tasks could be performed. The law firm heeded Greentree's advice and purchased a server robust enough to handle their needs, both now and in the future. Greentree added the new server, moving all of the desktops and data from the old server. The law firm's mission-critical software was installed on the new server and the data was transferred. With all of the needed data on the new server, Greentree trained the staff member to utilize certain tools and procedures to drastically reduce her time spent working on the network.

Also, Greentree added additional memory to the desktops and installed faster switches in the network which decreased install times and increased data flow, thereby further reducing time spent on managing the network. To fix the security issue, the newest version of antivirus software was purchased and installed on all of the office computers. Email was moved to the internal server using Exchange 2003 and accounts were created for all users. Greentree even connected a fax line to the server to save paper!

## Benefits

The best way to describe the solution is increased efficiency! The firm's problems were caused by inefficiencies in their network or processes. The Greentree Group solution emphasized efficiency in hardware, software, and procedures, all of which freed the office staff and allowed them to focus on their business, not technology.

The new server has more reliable equipment and improved performance. Now the law firm's mission-critical application runs faster. Also, the staff member is able to manage the network using the Server Management Console on the Windows Small Business Server. This powerful console makes tasks that were difficult before now simple and intuitive. When tasks are complicated, a Greentree technician can connect into the network using Remote Web Workplace. This allows Greentree to solve problems quickly and efficiently while the staff member continues with her primary duties.

The new server has also allowed the law firm to move its email from the hosting provider to the Exchange



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component of the server. Not only does this reduce costs, it also provides other benefits. The information is now stored in a central location on the server and each staff member uses Outlook 2003. The Exchange/Outlook combination delivers very strong junk mail filtering, reducing the time each person spent eliminating spam from their inbox. In addition, work emails can now be accessed remotely.

Additional memory in the office computers has made a difference in performance as well. A new installation of software takes 15 minutes compared to the two hours it took previously. All of the users' "My Documents" folders are now stored on the server, ensuring their data is backed up.

The antivirus and security update issues were addressed by purchasing new antivirus software and using features in the new server. The antivirus software provides the protection the firm's systems needed on all of their computers. The security updates are now installed and managed from one central location on the server to ensure all computers are up to date and secure. The interface helps by displaying new updates and providing the status of each computer.

The server also has a fax component that allows the staff to send faxes directly from their computers. Incoming faxes are directed to an email account and are forwarded to the appropriate individual. These changes have reduced paper costs and saved time. The staff member also learned how to use SharePoint technology to create an internal website from the server. Templates were added to the server so the staff has a central point to go to for files that are used repeatedly, saving time and money.

The law firm has benefited in several ways. New equipment and technology have ensured a solid, reliable network. The staff member no longer worries about computer failure and data loss. The server has provided a more comprehensive and consistent data backup system. Technology-related tasks are simpler and take less time, allowing the staff member to focus on her primary responsibilities. As a result, the law firm has improved their overall efficiency and productivity. Instead of crippling their business, IT is now driving business efficiencies that help the firm achieve its goals.

## At a Glance

### Problem

- A lemon law office had no dedicated IT personnel
- IT work was accomplished by a knowledgeable staff member, but it was consuming 75% of her time - She couldn't focus on her primary job
- The firm's prior IT technical support was unreliable

### Solution

- The firm needed a more robust, manageable network
- The different software packages and vendors needed to be simplified or eliminated
- The law firm's data needed to be backed up, but in a cheaper, more reliable and efficient manner

### Benefit

- The new server provided enough capacity and ability to greatly reduce time managing the network
- Previously disparate functions were consolidated using tools and features available through the new server technology
- Security updates and software were installed on each computer to protect the firm's data
- The staff member now spends less than 15% of her time managing IT duties!

## About The Greentree Group

The Greentree Group is a privately owned business founded in 1993, with corporate headquarters in Dayton, Ohio and operational locations in Dallas, TX, Richmond, VA, St. Louis, MO, Washington, DC, Warner Robins, GA, Oklahoma City, OK, and Ogden, UT. Greentree provides demonstrated quality in the core competencies of information technology, financial management and program management. Within these competencies Greentree utilizes emerging and leading edge technologies in order to address and overcome a wide array of challenges. The Group is a talented collection of analysts and problem-solvers truly providing "The Competitive Edge Solution<sup>®</sup>". For more information please contact (937)-490-5500 or email [information@greentreegroup.com](mailto:information@greentreegroup.com).



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