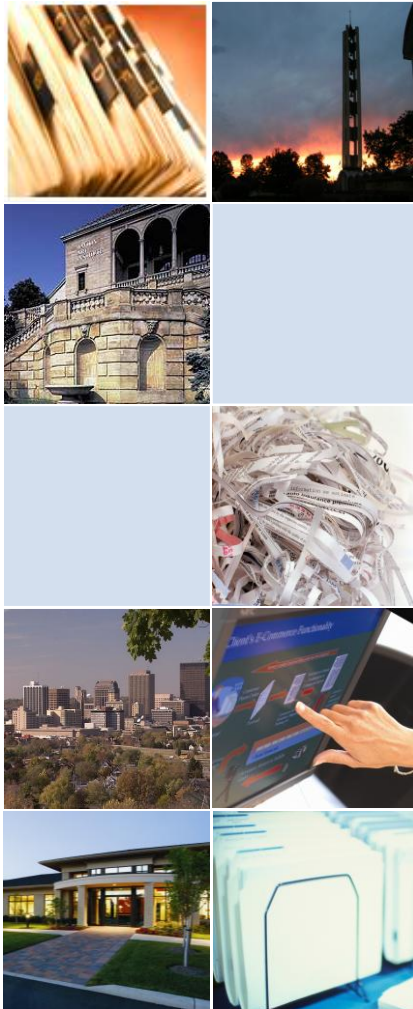




THE GREENTREE GROUP

The Competitive Edge Solution®



Dayton Area Title Firm Closes the Deal with Technology

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Dayton Area Title Firm Closes the Deal with Technology

Summary

Many small businesses depend on aging technology that is unreliable for everyday support. The business owner of a title agency was tired of walking into the office and wondering if the IT network would be working that day. The business would run smoothly if the technology infrastructure was working, but some days the infrastructure would be unreliable and cause problems. The problems affected not only the home office, but also the branches it supported in the area. When the main office had a slow, unreliable day then so did the branch offices that connected to it. The problems stemmed from two aging servers that the title company used. Also, the title agency had a risk of data loss due to server failure, underpowered desktops and problems with their hosted email service. The Greentree Group assessed the agency's symptoms and recommended a complete solution that addressed all issues the agency was having. The two aging servers were replaced with one robust server robust capable of handling the title agency's requirements. Greentree also added memory to the desktops, moved the email in-house, and updated the firewall to speed up the connection to the branch locations. These solutions addressed the root problems instead of just placing band aids on the symptoms. Now, the main office has no reliability issues, is more productive, and has quicker communication with their branch offices. All of this results in the title company being able to help their customers in a responsive and complete manner.

Problem

Aging technology can interfere in the day-to-day administrative environment of many small businesses. Aging is inevitable with any technology, and updating technology is critical to supporting businesses better. The title agency was having problems with two aging servers, slow desktops, and a slow connection to their branch offices. These issues caused drops in productivity on the days the infrastructure was having problems. The customer was also being affected because of the inability of the office environment to function at a regular pace.

The aging servers were the biggest issue the title company was experiencing. Their primary server had experienced several hardware failures over a one-week time frame. This posed a few major problems for the title agency. The first problem was the risk that the server would fail and the company would lose an abundance of business critical data and information. Another problem was the company couldn't function without business specific software that was running on the server. Since the title agency has several branch offices that use a secure connection to the main office, any small disruption to those connections meant the branch offices productivity was reduced.

Also, the desktop computers were underpowered and hindering the staff's performance. Some of the underpowered desktops were also missing critical Windows updates. This posed a security problem for the title agency as well as a productivity problem.



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The title agency's mail was hosted by their Internet Service Provider, or ISP. The ISP was slow to respond to requests which prevented the title agency from operating properly. Also, the mail could not be accessed from outside of the office further reducing productivity of the office staff.

Solution

After assessing the title agency's symptoms, The Greentree Group recommended solutions that addressed the root problems instead of suggesting constant maintenance and band aids. Greentree recommended purchasing one new server to replace the two aging servers, upgrading memory in the desktops, choosing a new ISP, replacing the firewall, and backing up company data to protect from catastrophic loss.

The Greentree Group recommended a Windows Small Business Server 2003 R2 server robust enough to handle the title agency's needs both now and in the future. Windows Small Business Server 2003 R2 features an internal mail system; simplified management; secure, yet straightforward remote access and network update process capabilities. Greentree added the new server, moved all of the desktops to it, and consolidated the data from the two servers. The title agency's business specific software was installed on the new server.

Greentree also added memory to the desktop computers to increase performance and changed the times when regular maintenance tasks were scheduled to optimize performance. Using Windows Small Business Server 2003 R2, Windows updates for the entire office are managed from one location. Email was also brought in-house using Exchange 2003.

Greentree addressed the branch office connections with a two-part solution; Greentree analyzed the situation and was able to determine an increase of the network bandwidth would help prevent the branch offices from being disconnected. Greentree met with several Internet service providers and translated the information into terms the title agency could understand. As a result, the title agency selected an ISP that could provide more bandwidth at an affordable price. For the second part of the branch office solution, Greentree suggested replacing the main office's aging firewall since it seemed to also be a source of the connection problems. The replacement firewall solved the connection problems and enabled the staff at the branch offices to stay productive.

Prior to the new server installation, all of the data was not backed up on the server due to an unreliable tape drive and limited storage capacity. Greentree created a backup that runs daily in order to ensure a continuity of operations in case disaster strikes. Windows Server 2003 technology provides the users with a way to recover files and folders that may have been deleted, modified or even to compare with a previous version. Key employees receive a report each morning that displays the server details including the backup status, update status, critical alerts and more. This provides peace of mind knowing that everything is okay.

With Greentree's assistance, the title agency was able to weigh all possible options and choose the solution that fit their company's needs. Greentree was able to help them realize their specific business needs so that



they could choose a “best fit” IT solution that was aligned with the company’s goals; because it’s about your business...not technology!

Benefits

The title agency has benefited several ways from The Greentree Group Solution. The risk of data loss has been mitigated, the hardware runs much faster improving productivity, the branch offices have a faster and more reliable connection to the main office, they saved money with a new ISP, and the title agency has a reliable network that performs tasks that they could not perform before. Instead of possibly crippling their business, IT is now driving their business efficiencies.

Not only is the new server more reliable and at less risk to crash, but The Greentree Group also implemented a tape backup solution that provides continuity of operation in case of catastrophic failure. This ensures that company data will always be available in the event of an emergency. The hardware also improved performance compared to the previous two servers. This caused the title agency’s business-specific software to run faster. The desktop computers perform faster simply by increasing the memory.

The increased network bandwidth and new firewall at the main office ensure the branch offices stay connected so the staff can take care of their customers. By researching a new ISP, Greentree has saved the title company money on their bandwidth as well as problems arising from poor service. Furthermore, the new server allowed the title agency to move its mail internally, from the ISP to the Exchange component of the server. Not only did this help the title agency further reduce its costs, it also provided other benefits. The information is now stored in a central location on the server. While the server has a very good junk mail filter, it is more powerful when integrated with Outlook 2003. Junk mail is filtered from the inbox and sent directly to the junk mail folder. This reduces the time spent eliminating spam from the inbox and is another efficiency gained by utilizing technology. Additional benefits include mail access from any computer with an Internet connection and accidentally deleted emails are recoverable.

Since the title agency processes a large amount of paperwork, a network printer/scanner unit was connected. Scanned files can be emailed directly from the scanner. This saves time and money in the form of paper, ink, and employee time at the printer and scanner.

Another great feature of Windows Small Business Server 2003 R2 is Remote Web Workplace. The staff uses it to connect to mail and the office computers when they are out of the office. Remote Web Workplace uses the Internet to access the office computers. Using just a website address, this straightforward yet secure connection enables the staff to access the network. This means they can stay connected with their customers when they are out of the office.



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At a Glance

Problem

- A title agency had aging technology that hindered their business and posed great risks
- The hardware was unreliable and slow affecting productivity
- The title agency's branch offices were also negatively impacted by the poor network

Solution

- The agency needed a new server and added memory to their desktops
- A data backup and continuity of operations plan was needed
- More bandwidth, better service, and a better price was needed from an ISP

Benefit

- The new server was faster, more reliable, and posed less risk to crash and lose data
- The desktops and connection to branch offices were faster, boosting productivity
- The office staff benefited from other aspects of the new network
 - In-house email that can be accessed remotely
 - Better junk email filters
 - Scanned documents and paper directly faxed through email
- All of this equaled more productivity!

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[®]". For more information please contact (937)-490-5500 or email information@greentreegroup.com.



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