



Customer: Asian Pacific Building Corporation

Web Site: www.apbc.com.au

Customer Size: 100–5,000

Country or Region: Australia

Industry: Professional services – Architecture, Engineering, & Construction

Partner: Total Network Support

Customer Profile

Asian Pacific Building Corporation specializes in commercial property development in Melbourne, Australia. It has 10 offices and approximately 120 employees, supported by a two-person IT department.

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft System Center Essentials 2007

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Property Developer Slashes Administration Time with Powerful Management Tool

“Overall, Microsoft System Center Essentials 2007 will save us up to 15 hours a week, so our investment will pay for itself within a couple of months.”

Lucas Yeates, Infrastructure Engineer, Asian Pacific Building Corporation

Asian Pacific Building Corporation’s IT staff struggled to manage 15 servers and 120 workstations across 10 sites. Working with Total Network Support, a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner, the company deployed Microsoft System Center Essentials 2007. This new solution is helping the company save several hours each week with automated management and remote software deployment, freeing IT staff to focus on proactive, value-adding activities.

Business Needs

Asian Pacific Building Corporation (APBC), based in Melbourne, Australia, has grown from a family-run construction business that started in 1867 to a modern, innovative property development company. It pioneered the award-winning Business Network Precinct in Melbourne – a commercial office district with a variety of businesses interacting in a vibrant work environment.

With 120 staff located across 10 different offices, including one call center, APBC’s two IT-support employees were kept very busy attending to the needs of 15 servers and 120 workstations.

“Our main problems were PC performance issues and slow response times from the IT

department because we were so snowed under with work,” says Lucas Yeates, Infrastructure Engineer at APBC. “We had difficulty being proactive. If someone’s PC was running slowly, sometimes they wouldn’t tell us about it until one day they would switch it on and it wouldn’t work. Then they would ask us why we hadn’t fixed it.

“Similarly, our server maintenance processes were almost entirely manual. We had some tools for checking server logs, but that was about it. We didn’t find out about issues until they were big problems.”

APBC used Microsoft® Windows® Server Update Services to automate software updates, but all of its other technology support processes were manual.



"We started looking at management software, but the products on the market either didn't do enough or were too expensive," says Yeates. "There was a huge gap between the technology aimed at large enterprises and the small-business products that had limited scope and capabilities."

Solution

Working with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Total Network Support, APBC participated in the Rapid Deployment Program for Microsoft System Center Essentials 2007.

Specifically designed to meet the needs of midsize businesses with up to 500 PCs and 30 servers, System Center Essentials provides a unified environment for IT professionals to proactively and efficiently manage their IT systems.

Starting in March 2007, APBC conducted a pilot project, using the package to manage 7 servers and nearly 40 workstations across different departments and locations.

"We knew APBC had a sizeable infrastructure and were looking to reduce the complexity of managing it," says Loryan Strant, Senior Systems Consultant at Total Network Support. "They instantly recognized it could help them control their IT environment."

System Center Essentials allows the IT team to publish applications to workstations as easily as selecting a checkbox. Once published, these applications are uploaded over the network and installed on each workstation the next time they are restarted.

The systems management tool took over system update and patch management from Microsoft Windows Server Update Services. It also monitors the health of APBC's servers, including the Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000

database software and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003.

"System Center Essentials sends me daily e-mail reports that keep me up to date with the status of all our IT systems," says Yeates. "It tells me if there are issues with PCs or potential problems with servers. It also makes recommendations where there are things we could be doing better."

Following the success of this pilot, the company decided to implement the management software across its entire technology infrastructure, a project that was underway in May 2007 with completion expected by the end of June 2007.

Benefits

Significant time savings. System Center Essentials has delivered meaningful time savings in technology management tasks such as server and desktop monitoring and remote management. This has allowed the IT department to proactively focus on other tasks.

By automating tasks such as server and desktop management and software distribution, System Center Essentials saves time and effort for APBC's IT department. Server maintenance tasks that used to take four hours each day are now completed in less than an hour. Installing applications over the network has halved the amount of time spent on application distribution.

"Overall, Microsoft System Center Essentials 2007 will save us up to 15 hours a week, which means our investment will pay for itself within a couple of months," says Yeates. "Before putting the system in, we estimated it would take us 50 hours to roll out the 2007 Microsoft® Office system upgrade, now it will take less than a day."

Remote management. IT staff no longer need to travel to remote offices when updating PCs or installing software. These tasks used to take up to 40 hours each month, but are now reduced to as few as 10 hours. "I don't have to drive to other offices and manually install software anymore," says Yeates. "I can just click a box, and when they switch on the computer the next morning, the application or update is installed."

Time to be proactive. APBC's IT staff now have more time to provide responsive user support, perform proactive maintenance, and focus on value-adding work. "With more time up our sleeves and all our alerts centralized into a single, easy-to-use interface, we are now aware of and can attend to issues before they become big problems," says Yeates.

Powerful tools for midsize business. System Center Essentials combines the functionality of enterprise-level products such as Microsoft Operations Manager 2005 and Microsoft Systems Management Server 2003 in a single interface. "This package gives us the capabilities we need from Microsoft's high-end systems management tools without breaking the bank," says Yeates.

Table 1: Monthly hours for IT tasks before and after System Center Essentials 2007

Task	Before	After	Time saved
Server, desktop, and device monitoring	60-80	20	66-75%
Software distribution	15	7.5	50%
Branch office support	40	10-15	63-75%