



Freight Forwarder Moves Away from Novell, Installs Integrated Microsoft Solution

Overview

Country: Australia

Industry: Freight forwarding

Customer Profile

Established in 1987, Transitainer is an Australian freight consolidation and forwarding business that provides international sea and air freight services.

Business Situation

Transitainer's outdated Novell NetWare environment was becoming unreliable, difficult to support and was not compatible with the new Australian Customs computer system. The company also wanted to improve staff productivity through collaboration and remote access.

Solution

Transitainer migrated from Netware to a Windows environment and installed Microsoft Small Business Server 2003.

Benefits

- Compatible with the Australian Customs IT environment.
- Mobility supported with remote access.
- Increased staff productivity.
- Improved data integrity.
- More reliable backups.

“Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 allows us to spend more time running and expanding our business and less time worrying about technical issues.”

Agnelo Lopes, Import/Export Coordinator, Transitainer

In an environment where time really is money, companies in the import/export industry appreciate the importance of reliable communications. These businesses need to be in touch with customers and suppliers 24x7 and must also be in constant contact with customs authorities. Australian freight forwarder Transitainer was struggling to communicate effectively with its outdated Novell NetWare technology environment. Poor performance and reliability were taking their toll on the business and the system was incompatible with the Australian Customs upgraded technology environment. In response, Transitainer overhauled its technology platform, moving to an environment based on Microsoft® Windows® that featured Microsoft Small Business Server 2003. The implementation has improved productivity and data integrity, provided remote access, decreased support costs and allowed staff to take advantage of a raft of advanced collaboration features.



Situation

Founded in 1987, Transitaire is an Australian freight consolidation and forwarding business that provides sea and air freight services to companies around the globe. The company has 15 staff and the same number of PCs at its headquarters in Melbourne, Victoria. It also recently acquired a border customs business in Albury, New South Wales. The rapidly growing business is planning to open new offices in Sydney and Brisbane by the end of 2006.

Managing imports and exports is a complex business that requires excellent communications between Transitaire, its customers, suppliers and the Australian Customs Service. Most of this communication happens over the Web or by email, which means that a stable and reliable technology platform is a business necessity.

Transitaire constantly needs to download shipment advice and updates from customers and important notifications and digital certificates from Australian Customs. But Transitaire's elderly technology environment had become a liability. It ran GroupWise on Novell NetWare 5 for Small Business, but this platform was incompatible with other systems.

"Running a NetWare environment only gave us basic mail functionality and no business advantage," says Agnelo Lopes, Import/Export Coordinator at Transitaire. "In fact, it was beginning to hinder our performance. We couldn't communicate properly with clients and suppliers and had trouble sending and receiving attachments."

It was also becoming difficult for Transitaire to find support for its outdated technology. The platform's lack of remote access meant staff on the move were unable to access documents, email and files. In addition, Transitaire's technology partner could not

access the system remotely, meaning the company had to wait for on-site visits, which were time-consuming and costly.

Compounding the situation, Australian Customs was set to overhaul its entire technology environment in late 2005. All companies that needed to interact with Customs had to ensure their systems met its stringent requirements and specifications. Customs recommended that all businesses needing to connect to its systems move to a Windows environment. Transitaire realized its outdated technology could not communicate with Customs' new Integrated Cargo System (ICS).

"We need to be in contact with Customs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," says Lopes. "If our systems don't work with Customs', we can't run our business."

Transitaire drew up a comprehensive list of requirements for a new system. It wanted a system that would:

- Interact with the Australian Customs ICS.
- Integrate with new technologies as they were released.
- Remove communication difficulties with customers and suppliers.
- Provide stability and reliability.
- Provide a scalable platform to support future business growth.
- Provide remote access for staff working away from the office and its technology partner.

Solution

Transitaire spent a month reviewing all the options to find a system that met its requirements. It soon decided on Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 Standard Edition.

As well as a software refresh, Transitaire also completely upgraded its server hardware.

Transitainer chose Total Network Support, its existing technology partner, to carry out the implementation because of the company's superior skill levels and attention to detail. Established in 1984, Total Network Support has 18 staff and 35 PCs and notebooks at its South Melbourne office.

"What really swayed Transitainer was that Microsoft Small Business Server had so many more features to offer than other products," says Loryan Strant, Senior Systems Consultant at Total Network Support. "It wasn't just a server with email; it was a complete collaboration suite with features such as remote access built in."

Total Network Support configured Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 offsite and then worked onsite to migrate the company's data from the old system to the new. The final implementation was completed over a weekend and included the installation of new hardware such as HP servers and PCs and IBM notebooks.

In addition to Small Business Server, Transitainer installed Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 Standard Edition running Microsoft SQL Server™ 2003. This runs Transitainer's freight forwarding and customs brokerage software from software developer Eagle Datamation International (EDI).

Most staff were familiar with the Windows interface and were comfortable using the system from day one.

Benefits

Compatibility with Australian Customs

Moving to Microsoft ensured Transitainer's systems integrated seamlessly with the Australian Customs ICS. The more stable and reliable Windows platform gives the company confidence the system will continue to function without a hitch well into the future.

This peace of mind can be passed on to Transitainer's customers and suppliers. The company no longer has to deal with the frustration and anxiety caused by communication breakdowns due to the incompatibility of its email platform.

"The new system has driven significant savings in terms of the time we used to spend supporting and managing our technology environment," says Lopes. "Selecting software is now a lot easier. Instead of having to search out Novell-compatible products, we can now pick and choose – just about everything runs on Windows."

Remote access increases productivity

Staff working offsite or travelling for business can now use remote access to stay in touch with the office. Staff use Microsoft Office Outlook® Web Access and Remote Web Workplace to access their PCs and email remotely.

"Many of our sales staff now only need to come into the office one day per week," says Lopes. "This gives them more time to be on the road doing their job. The more time they spend on the road, the more business they can bring in. Another benefit is that, when travelling, management staff don't lose touch with what's going on in the office and can respond to emails as if they were at their desks."

The collaboration features in Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 are also helping to increase productivity by allowing staff to share calendars and store documents and internal information, giving them faster access to critical data.

Improved security and data integrity

Transitainer's file storage systems are now more compatible with its backup software.

For More Information

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For more information about Total Network Support products and services, call (613) 9682 9300 or visit the Web site at: www.tns.com.au

For more information about Transitainer products and services, call (613) 9328 1275 or visit the Web site at: www.transitainervic.com.au

Instead of having its file system spread across different machines and constantly having to rebuild and reindex files, all company information is now stored in a central, secure repository.

Transitainer now has greater visibility of its backup system, allowing it to conduct most basic maintenance in-house.

The Microsoft Active Directory® technology included in Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 gives Transitainer a central authentication system for remote offices and offsite access. Active Directory's policy deployment and network hierarchy capabilities have simplified management and support of the company's IT environment. It has also improved security and enabled staff to perform routine functions such as adding and deactivating users.

As the business grows, Transitainer plans to install a terminal server and run thin clients out to the remote sites.

"Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 allows us to spend more time running and expanding our business and less time worrying about technical issues," says Lopes. "We now have a system we can depend on and a strong platform for future growth."

Microsoft Windows Server System

Microsoft Windows Server System is a line of integrated and manageable server software designed to reduce the complexity and cost of IT. Windows Server System enables you to spend less time and budget on managing your systems so that you can focus your resources on other priorities for you and your business.

For more information about Windows Server System, go to: www.microsoft.com/windowsserversystem

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 Standard Edition
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2000
 - Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Standard Edition
 - Microsoft Windows Server system
 - Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Active Directory

Hardware

- HP dx2000 PCs
- IBM R50 notebooks
- HP ML350G3 server
- HP ML150G1 server
- HP UPS
- Check Point Safe@Office 225 firewall

Partners

- Total Network Support

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