



DATALIANT'S CITRIX SOLUTION BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO RECRUITER'S OBSOLETE INFRASTRUCTURE

By late 2000, Lucas Group's IT infrastructure was starting to show its age. To stay connected and productive, the nationwide recruiting firm's 250+ employees were relying on creaky Dell Pentium 233 desktops connected to a very busy frame relay network.

"We had a bunch of old PCs networked to 11 local servers," says Peter Yund, the firm's IT Manager. "Users accessed Microsoft Office files through the local servers, and we pushed mail to their personal folders on the desktop. We also deployed a contact management application called EZaccess from our Atlanta office, but it usually needed five minutes to load."

Downturn Puts the Brakes to Upgrade Plans

Yund says the combination of remote offices, old technology, and an overburdened network pipe was stretching his two-person department to the limit. Unfortunately, it also happened to be the height of the dotcom downturn. With business off and budgets tight, management decided to postpone spending on new technology until the economy rebounded.

For Yund, this decision meant two more years of nursing along obsolete hardware and software. "By 2002 the local servers were out of warranty," he notes. "And the desktops were giving us a lot more hard drive failures. So when the economy started to pick up, Rick Bruno, our new CFO, convinced management it was time to invest in new technology."

But which technology? Yund says Lucas Group could have updated its existing infrastructure or migrated to something more flexible and efficient, like Citrix. While in favor of the second option, he had to show that Citrix would be a winner for the bottom line.

"Replacing desktops could easily cost \$250,000," he says. "Converting them to dumb terminals and putting in a Citrix farm with 10 servers would immediately save us \$100,000."

Dataliant Takes the Lead on New Citrix Farm

The numbers sold management on Citrix. But to make the switch, Yund needed an experienced technology partner. For him, the best choice was Dataliant, Inc.

"We had talked about installing a Citrix solution in 2000," says Dataliant Project Manager Dave Olszewski. "But they weren't ready to make the investment. Even so, those discussions gave Peter [Yund] a chance to look us over and see how we worked."

And Yund liked what he saw. He also knew a large Citrix VAR (Value Added Reseller) probably wouldn't deliver the same level of service. "We'd be small potatoes for a big VAR. With Dataliant, I knew I could call them if I ran into a problem—even at 8 o'clock at night."

Dataliant began the infrastructure upgrades in October 2002 and finalized work in January 2003. The project team converted the desktops to dumb terminals and installed 10 servers in Atlanta. They also implemented Citrix MetaFrame Access Suite on the servers, so Lucas Group's users would have on-demand access to Microsoft Office XP and other business-critical data.

"They did the whole thing," notes Yund. "I did some of the hauling of bricks, as it were. But they laid them up."

New Infrastructure Lowers Costs, Improves Reliability

With the servers centralized in Atlanta, Yund says it is now practical to do daily backups to tape. The new infrastructure also enabled him to eliminate the Frame Relay network and substitute DSL connections at the remote offices. "We've been able to cut our network costs from \$10,000 to \$2,000 a month—and create redundant connections at each location. If the primary DSL goes down, it takes just a minute to reconfigure for the backup."

End users are also enthusiastic about the upgrade. Their applications are actually running faster (thanks to the DSL connections and 1.4Ghz servers), and they now have the option of working

remotely, which was impractical before the upgrade.

Yund says the migration has had other benefits as well. "We've had a huge drop in help desk requirements, so we've been able to eliminate one tech support position. That's saving the company \$40,000 a year in salary alone. All-in all, going with Dataliant's Citrix solution has been a great move for our company."

Olszewski notes that savings from reduced communication, personnel, and overhead costs suggest a project payback period of just over a year. "But it was easily under a year if you calculate in productivity gains for 250 employees. Citrix delivered the kind of ROI a CTO or CFO can really love."