

Law Firm Founded in 1860 Stays on Leading Edge of Technology with Network Upgrade

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Sands Anderson Marks & Miller, PC, a Richmond, VA-based law firm with more than 60 attorneys and 140 employees, has slashed backup and restore times by 75 percent, and reduced file retrieval time by 50 percent, since upgrading to the Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Standard Edition operating system, replacing its old Microsoft Windows NT 4.0 Server systems. Using Windows Server 2003 Terminal Server to manage remote sites has reduced system administration time for this task by 15 hours per week. The company is also enjoying a more stable and easier to manage network environment.

Company Overview

Sands Anderson Marks & Miller, PC offers a comprehensive range of transactional and litigation legal services to businesses, financial institutions, governments, individuals and insurance companies. Clients have access to the resources and breadth of experience of a full-service firm as well as the direct personal contact with attorneys found in smaller firms. Headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, Sands Anderson's attorneys are able to help clients with legal needs throughout the Commonwealth and North Carolina with regional offices located in Radford, Fredericksburg, and McLean, Virginia, and the Research Triangle of North Carolina. The firm's state-of-the-art technology contributes to its ability to serve clients efficiently and keep them informed about their matters. Founded over 140 years ago, the Sands Anderson law firm is grounded on a philosophy and commitment to excellence, integrity and reliability.

Situation

With 140 employees, including more than 60 attorneys, and five locations, Sands Anderson Marks & Miller, requires a leading edge network infrastructure as it provides legal services to numerous local governments, regional authorities, counties, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and several Fortune 500 corporations. This is why the law firm was eager to update its existing network that was based on the Microsoft® Windows NT® 4.0 Server operating system.

The network had served the law firm well, but growth at the firm, and the increasing needs of attorneys who require anytime, and from anywhere, access to electronic client files and research tools, were putting ever more strain on the network. The firm required a network operating system that would provide centralized management for its remote sites, and administrative control of the desktop, without being obtrusive to users. The firm also needed a more robust operating system as it was experiencing difficulties running some application combinations due to software conflicts. And of course the transition to whatever new network operating system was chosen,

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Solution Overview

Industry

Legal

Business Need

Required a new network operating system that was more stable and easier to manage than the existing Microsoft® Windows NT® 4.0 Server operating system.

Solution

Deployed Windows Server™ 2003 and the Windows Server 2003 Active Directory® directory service.

Benefits

- 75 percent reduction in time required for backup and restore tape cataloging.
- 50 percent reduction in time required for file retrieving.
- Reduced administrative time to manage remote sites.
- Seamless transition to Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003, with users experiencing zero downtime.

had to be as seamless as possible to safeguard the productivity of the firm's attorneys and other workers.

Solution

Sands Anderson Marks & Miller, working with SyCom Technologies, a Microsoft Certified Partner based in Richmond, VA, chose to deploy the Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system, and the Windows Server 2003 Active Directory® directory service. The team deployment team created a single domain serving the main office and all remote sites. An in-place upgrade was performed, bringing Windows Server 2003 servers into the domain, before retiring the old Windows NT primary and backup domain controllers, to assure that the network was always available.

Benefits

The new network operating system is providing the system stability and security features to support the anytime, from anywhere, access the firm needed. And the transition went smoothly.

"I expected down-time," says Donna L. Konseck, Director of Information Technology, Sands Anderson Marks & Miller. "We left one night with Windows NT running and came back the next morning to Active Directory and Windows Server 2003 running. Our users experienced zero downtime."

The firm is enjoying better performance across a range of operations.

"Backup and restore procedures are much faster," Konseck says. "It used to take two hours to catalog a tape, now it takes less than 30 minutes. File retrieving and saving is more than 50 percent faster, resulting in significant time benefits for lawyers and legal staff."

Windows Server 2003 is also making it easier for the firm's IT staff to manage the server and desktop environments. Windows Server 2003 provides a wider range of features to centralize and simplify management duties, including the Group Policy Management Console (GPMC).

The firm is also using Windows Server 2003 Terminal Server, which is ideal for deploying applications that are frequently updated, are difficult to use, or that need to be accessible from remote sites or from a range of devices. Because only keystrokes are transmitted across the network, Terminal Server uses little bandwidth. Terminal Server has also reduced the time spent managing remote sites.

"Using Terminal Server to manage remote sites has reduced IT time spent on remote administration by 15 hours per week," Konseck says. "This adds up to significant savings."

The Windows Server System™ is Microsoft's comprehensive family of server applications for building, deploying, and managing next-generation, integrated applications and Web experiences. Designed with mission-critical performance in mind, the Windows Server System provides fast time-to-market as well as scalability, reliability, and manageability for the global, Web-enabled enterprise. Built from the ground up for interoperability using open Web standards such as XML, the Windows Server System enables a distributed computing model for the Internet, based on Internet protocols and standards in order to revolutionize the way computers talk to one another.

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For more information on SyCom Technologies services and solutions, visit the Web site at: <http://www.sycomtech.com/>
For more information about Sands Anderson Marks & Miller, visit the Web site at: <http://www.SandsAnderson.com/>

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Director of Information Technology
Sands Anderson Marks & Miller



SyCom is client focused and rich in technical expertise. Our core competencies are focused on improving business communications through effective design, integration, management, staffing and life-cycle support of networked communication systems and web-enabling applications.

"We feel great about the Windows Server 2003 operating system because it can help our customers in so many ways."

David D'Surney
Manager - Consulting Services
SyCom Technologies