

ESSENTIALSERVER™ CASE STUDY ACCOUNTING

EssentialServer lends a hand to *Need A Little Help Bookkeeping Services Ltd.*

Company Background

Need a Little Help Bookkeeping Services Ltd. (NALH) has provided bookkeeping services for 20 years, ever since Joyce Wishart set up a one-woman business serving local companies. Now her former one-woman operation has grown into one of the larger bookkeeping services in greater Vancouver. NALH provides onsite and remote bookkeeping services to small and medium sized companies and provides ongoing support to film productions. The industry segments that NALH supports include film, food production, service, engineering, manufacturing, and marketing. NALH also customizes, installs and supports popular MAC & PC-based accounting software to meet individual companies' needs.

Technology History

NALH had a peer-to-peer network, consisting of five desktop PCs running Windows 98 along with one Apple Macintosh. All computers were used to book new jobs, track projects, and manage customer files. In addition, NALH runs multiple accounting applications such as Accpac, Bedford, MYOB, QuickBooks, and others on each machine and used Microsoft Office for basic letter writing, spreadsheets, and e-mail.

All the PCs shared information from a non-fault-tolerant computer with unreliable backup capabilities. The Macintosh, for its part, couldn't access shared data on the disk.

Solution

Optima Networks Ltd. (ONE) based in Burnaby, B.C. looked at installing a central server to provide a reliable backup solution and shared disk that was easy to regularly access. ONE originally looked at installing a Microsoft Small Business Solution but the cost with professional services would have been over \$6,500.00 - and over NALH's budget. ONE had been in discussions with Merlin Software Inc. the developer of Essential Server, a product that they felt would be an excellent solution for NALH. In early August 2001, ONE and Merlin installed an Essential Server in NALH's environment.

This unit took only 1 hour and 30 minutes to install. Two gigabytes (GB) of data was moved from the customer's machine and backup was done in approximately 30 minutes. After mapping out the network at their testing facilities, ONE installed the Essential Server at the customer site. The final implementation was completed in less than 2 hours.

Benefits

Above all, NALH wants to share information and streamline business processes. "In today's market for bookkeeping services, our accounting technicians are continually forced to work faster at a time when jobs are becoming more complex," says Joyce Wishart, Managing Director of NALH. "So far, we've taken advantage of the built-in CD-ROM burner that allows us to share data with customers by enabling us to create CDs of customer data. This is especially helpful when we're working with customers who do not have Zip drives, but only have access to CD ROM players. To ensure our success, we're continually finding ways to become more efficient. And the Essential Server helps. We saved over \$3,000.00 over the NT solution, it's cost-effective and the implementation hasn't disrupted our business."

Now that the NALH network incorporates Merlin Essential Server, the company is confident in the reliability of their backups and has the ability to access customer data at all times. Each accounting technician has their own PC along with immediate access to all customer data-and the ability to create financial-data CDs for customers who need them.

Douglas C. Atkinson at ONE adds, "Where we would have once installed Microsoft Small Business Server, we now have a simple, attractive, appliance that's extremely reliable and very cost effective to implement and support. It just doesn't get better than that."

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Joyce Wishart, Managing Director, NALH