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Case Study

W&E Baum

Memorial Manufacturer Retools to a More Efficient Ordering Process System

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W&E Baum is one of the leading manufacturers of memorials in the United States. Because its products literally have its customers' names on them, precise attention to detail, job quality, and deadlines are critical. Over the last several years, however, the company's order-processing system had become stressed and inefficient. Tapping the power of Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003 and Windows Small Business Server 2003, the company was able to simplify job collaboration and communications. For example, there is a single, common document workspace where Baum's customers and staff interact to better manage projects. The overall solution has generated a significant increase in production capacity and solved security concerns. Baum projects a minimum of U.S. \$100,000 in increased capacity.

Situation

W&E Baum manufactures the memorials that hundreds of corporations, universities, hospitals, and places of worship have used to thank, honor, and reward individuals and commemorate events. Recently, the company was asked to create the Wall of Immigration for Ellis Island, a 750,000-name project. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Baum manufactured numerous memorials honoring the 3,000 individuals who died in that attack. Baum also handles ongoing recognition programs for customers like the Make-A-Wish Foundation, ASPCA, Clemson University, and Rockefeller University.

Managing so much data that has such emotional significance to its customers is Baum's highest priority. However, its order-processing system had evolved to the point of becoming inefficient and potentially more error prone.

Order-processing Inefficiencies

Historically, Baum's clients submitted orders by mail, fax, or e-mail. The information, specifically the text to be engraved or cast, flowed from department to department in an unstructured fashion, typically by hand or at best through internal e-mail attachments. Thus, there was no way to track where the inscription for a particular order was or who had responsibility at any point in time. In a worst-case scenario, a project could "fall through the cracks," get lost, and not be delivered on time. As a result, Baum wanted to take a fresh look at its order processing system and improve the workflow of information behind the process.

Security Concerns

Because of the sensitive nature of customer memorials and the overall need to protect the company's fundamental business, it was imperative that Baum's network maintain strict privacy, ensure secure communications, and control server access. Baum realized that it needed to upgrade its network security and the security of all related communications, internal and external. In short, the company needed a solution that would bring peace of mind to the company and to its customers.

Solution

“ We can see an increase in capacity across the company that could easily translate into \$100,000 or more in additional business. We're simply able to do more with less. ”

Maurice Zagha
CEO, W&E Baum

Utilizing the IT expertise of Silicon-East, Baum's computer and networking consultant, Baum created a new, streamlined order-processing solution that included a secure and dependable network, staff and customer collaboration, improved e-mail communications, and aggressive spam filtering. Silicon-East created a powerful solution with Office Professional Edition 2003 and Windows Small Business Server 2003 that includes Windows SharePoint™ Services.

Microsoft® Windows® Small Business Server 2003 provided a simple, yet powerful way to protect Baum's network with a secure, integrated infrastructure. Windows Small Business Server 2003 includes Windows SharePoint Services, together they provide a secure, permission-based collaboration site

that gives sales staff access to large customer files directly from the programs in Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003.

Baum has 50 employees throughout its company with the largest headcount working in the manufacturing department. Sales, administration, and design departments are also represented.

Benefits

Streamlined Order Processing and Communications

Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 is used to improve e-mail communications in direct support of customer orders. Public calendars allow the staff to view and coordinate meetings and customer order commitments. The ability to manage internal, job-related e-mail by conversation, for example, maps precisely to the



Designers and Manufacturers
Donor Walls • Plaques • Awards • Memorials

Solution Overview

<http://www.webaum.com/>

Customer Size: 250 employees

Organization Profile

W&E Baum is an 80-year old manufacturer of memorials located in Freehold, New Jersey. Large and small corporations, universities, hospitals, and places of worship use Baum's products to thank, honor, and reward individuals and commemorate events. The company has 50 employees.

Business Situation

Baum processes 700 jobs a month. Every order results in a unique product. Tracking all of the customer inscription input and communications associated with each job became very inefficient. The company needed a solution that would improve productivity and provide a secure business environment.

Solution

Baum used a combination of Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003, and Microsoft® Windows® Small Business Server 2003 which includes Windows SharePoint™ Services to streamline its order-processing system and improve overall internal and external communications.

Benefits

- Streamlined order processing and communications reduces errors and speeds job completion.
- Dependable network functionality and communications out of the box
- Increased capacity from the software solution is expected to generate over \$100,000 in sales annually.

Hardware

- HP Proliant ML-350/G3 server with five hard drives in a RAID 3 array
- Sonicwall SOHO3 Internet Security Appliance
- White Box Pentium 3 and Pentium 4 workstations

Partner(s)

Silicon-East, Inc.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office Access
- Microsoft Office Excel
- Microsoft Office Outlook
- Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003
- Microsoft Office Word
- Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003

normal workflow pattern of projects moving through Baum's various departments, such as Sales, Design, and Manufacturing.

"Shared calendars are especially helpful with rush orders," says Maurice Zagha, Baum's Chief Executive Officer. "Each department manager can easily see priorities and timelines on orders that require special handling. Mistakes are minimized, and orders are delivered as promised."

Improved follow-up features such as colored flagging and setting reminders directly within an e-mail message enable Baum's staff to view e-mail messages by group, for example by customer order, and be reminded to take the appropriate action on time.

Users were trained to customize Outlook 2003 on their own workstations. As a result, several employees created rules to automatically sort their incoming mail into different folders for each customer.

The problem of unsolicited incoming e-mail ("spam") was minimized with the new junk mail filter capability in Outlook 2003. In addition, new capabilities in Microsoft Exchange Server 2003, a component of Windows Small Business Server 2003, allowed Baum to automatically recognize spam associated with mail servers that allow the open relay of e-mail messages.

Using Windows Small Business Server 2003 which includes Windows SharePoint Services, a secure collaboration site was created right out of the box. It gave the sales staff access to large customer files and made managing orders much more efficient.

For example, because each job typically lasts six or more weeks, precise, ongoing quality control is extremely important. In the new system, a single Office document located on the Windows SharePoint Services site captures all of the edits and changes associated with the names and personal information to be inscribed on a single project. This process has already helped to eliminate errors that could readily result from multiple communications between Baum and its customers through phone, fax, and e-mail.

Remote access was also very important to Baum. Salespersons in NY and Connecticut previously had only been using the remote desktop feature of Microsoft Windows XP Professional operating system from their offices to connect to other computers on the same network. Since the upgrade to Windows Small Business Server 2003, employees are able to connect to their computer via Remote Web Workplace. It enables them to check inventory, delivery dates and actually close deals while at a customer's office using any PC with an Internet connection.

Secure and Dependable Network

For the first time, the factory floor engraving operation was linked directly to the customer. A UNIX System router was easily integrated into the Windows Small Business Server 2003-based network. From the factory floor, the engraving machine sends an e-mail containing an image of the plate proofs to the customer for final approval. The customer actually "sees" a proof of the job directly from the machine that will be engraving the metal.

"Before Windows Small Business Server 2003, we would have never considered putting a computer station on the factory floor," says Zagha. "There were just too many security and dependability issues. But this experience has shown us that it is now not only possible, but also simple. Being able to e-mail a final proof directly from the software driving our engraving machines to our customer provides the ultimate level of order checking and customer service."

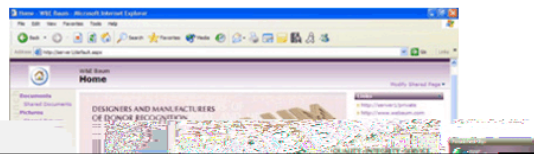
The network was further protected and maintained by Remote Alerts, which allowed Silicon-East to ensure the health of Baum's computer operations quickly, simply, and with minimal effort. And, Silicon-East only enabled those services and components that were needed, helping to eliminate setup oversights that could also inadvertently become security issues.

Microsoft Windows XP
Professional

Vertical Industries
Manufacturing

Country/Region
United States

SILICON EAST INC.



East President. "We were thrilled when we came in on Sunday and had everything up and running in three hours. Baum was open for business on Monday. This was a new experience for us."

Harrison also saw great added value for the client and his IT consulting business because of the ability to remotely manage networks.

"With previous versions of Small Business Server, we had to log on to each client's server to see a one-screen summary of server performance with