



Overview

Country: United States

Industry: Legal

Customer Profile

Fisher & Phillips LLP, founded in 1943, is one of the largest national law firms representing management in the areas of labor, employment, civil rights, employee benefits, and immigration law.

Business Situation

Fisher & Phillips had 400 workstations (from various manufacturers) in 10 offices across 7 states, running a variety of operating systems as well as a mixed word processing environment. Each office had a separate document repository which made it difficult to share work throughout the organization.

Solution

BOSS migrated the wide-area network to Active Directory®, Microsoft® Exchange 2000 Server, and a standardized desktop environment of Windows® XP and Microsoft Office XP. They also implemented a networked document management system.

Benefits

- Increased firm-wide productivity
- Improved document consistency
- Facilitated collaboration
- Improved network manageability
- ROI in less than one year

National Law Firm Boosts Quality & Efficiency with Platform, Desktop Upgrade

“The migration went better than I ever dreamed it would.... We easily realized a return on investment within a year – and saw many more intangible benefits.”

Jim Miskovsky, Director of Information Technology, Fisher & Phillips

After various mergers and acquisitions, labor lawyers Fisher & Phillips had amassed a highly eclectic IT environment with a wide range of operating systems and heterogeneous desktop applications. With its growing national reputation, the firm needed to ensure a consistent look and feel for its work product. And, like any business, it needed to ensure maximum productivity and efficiency across its increasingly widespread organization. So, Fisher & Phillips hired Business Oriented Software Solutions, Inc. (BOSS), a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner, to orchestrate a migration across 10 of its offices to a unified Microsoft Windows Server System™ infrastructure and standardized desktop environment of Microsoft Windows® XP Professional and Microsoft Office XP. With the help of BOSS's tools, U-Win and DiagWin Professional, the migration was executed with no disruption to the attorney's work routine. Fisher & Phillips reports that the migration has generated a return on investment in less than a year due to increased productivity, better collaboration, improved document consistency and reduced IT labor.



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Jim Miskovsky, Director of Information Technology, Fisher & Phillips

Situation

Fisher & Phillips is a labor and employment law firm that has been steadily rising in national prominence. From its original office in Atlanta, the firm has added and acquired branches in Charlotte, NC; Chicago, IL; Columbia SC; Fort Lauderdale, FL; Irvine, CA; Las Vegas, NV; New Orleans, LA; Oakland, CA; Orlando, FL; Portland, OR; and San Diego, CA.

As a result of this growth, the firm had gradually amassed an eclectic IT environment with 400 workstations operating on various versions of Microsoft® Windows® operating system, including Windows 95, 98, Millennium Edition, 2000, and Windows NT®. In addition, some staff were processing their documents with Microsoft Word, while others were using WordPerfect.

To thrive as a major national law firm, Fisher & Phillips needed to establish consistent practices across all its regional offices – not only in the look and feel of its work product, but also in the recommendations it makes.

The firm also wished to fully leverage its resources by facilitating collaboration and knowledge-sharing among attorneys. To that end, it needed to implement an inter-office document management system (DMS). “The DMS system provided a firm-wide repository for all our work product allowing for the collaboration and knowledge sharing we were looking for,” says Jim Miskovsky, Director of Information Technology for Fisher & Phillips.

Solution

Fisher & Phillips decided to establish an environment for optimized productivity and collaboration by implementing Microsoft Windows Server System™ integrated server software. Windows Server System provides integrated server infrastructure designed to optimize manageability, security, and reliability while lowering the overall costs of operations.

The firm had already begun the process by upgrading its network operating system from Microsoft Windows NT to Windows 2000

Advanced Server. They now sought to complete this transition by implementing Active Directory® service and migrating from Microsoft Exchange 5.5 to Exchange 2000 Server. Active Directory is part of Windows 2000 Advanced Server.

To standardize and optimize workstation environments, the company decided to upgrade all users to Windows XP and Microsoft Office XP.

“Some of our staff had been using WordPerfect for 15 years or more,” says Miskovsky. “But to achieve the consistency we were looking for, we needed to standardize our word processing, which is so key to our everyday practice. Our clients were dictating the direction on this, and the majority of our clients use Microsoft Word.”

To facilitate collaboration, they chose to implement Imanage DeskSite 6.5, a document management application tailored to the needs of the legal practice. DeskSite runs on Windows 2000 Advanced Server and Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000.

The Right Partner

Fisher & Phillips’s IT department realized it would need knowledgeable assistance with this major migration. After considering several consulting firms, it was soon clear that the best choice was Business Oriented Software Solutions, Inc. (BOSS), a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner based in Norcross, Georgia.

“What sold us on BOSS was their migration tools,” says Miskovsky. BOSS offers two applications to expedite the migration and network administration processes:

- BOSS DiagWin Professional enables system administrators to remotely generate an inventory of all hardware, software, network, and security information on Microsoft Windows-based desktops, laptops, and servers deployed across a network.
- BOSS U-Win automates the process of installing any version of the Windows

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Jim Miskovsky, Director of Information Technology, Fisher & Phillips

operating system, allowing for remote, unattended upgrades of all workstations in a network.

BOSS developed both applications with Microsoft development tools including Microsoft Visual C++® development system. They run on Windows 2000 Advanced Server and SQL Server 2000.

“Another big selling point of BOSS’s tools was that they were platform-independent,” says Miskovsky. “How perfect was that for us? We had every platform under the sun.”

Miskovsky also appreciated that BOSS took the time to understand and accommodate Fisher & Phillips’s specific objectives. Because BOSS was dealing with many busy attorneys’ work environments, it had to execute the migration with absolutely minimal impact on users – meaning no downtime, no interruption of workflow, and no loss of settings, preferences, or applications.

“BOSS was very careful to not get in the way of the attorneys’ work routine,” comments Miskovsky. “Most of our business is conducted by email, so the Exchange migration in particular had to be absolutely seamless.”

The Migration Process

To proceed with Fisher & Phillips’s migration, BOSS first conducted a study to evaluate the optimal architecture for the firm’s multi-state network. It considered a centralized Exchange infrastructure, but determined that the most cost-effective and stable approach for Fisher & Phillips was for each location to have its own server.

The next step was to set up an Active Directory infrastructure for the firm. BOSS built a global catalog at the firm’s Atlanta headquarters, then established a domain controller for each individual office. They were able to easily migrate all user login accounts in one shot, with no impact to the user experience.

BOSS then proceeded with planning and testing the messaging and desktop migration process. It used DiagWin Professional to generate a comprehensive inventory of all hardware and software in operation throughout the network. This enabled BOSS to easily determine where hardware upgrades would be needed to accommodate the new platform, and what individual applications would need to be reinstalled on each machine following the migration.

The migration team then divided the users into 10 groups, to migrate in batches. They planned to conduct both the mailbox and desktop migrations at the same time: one team managed the transfer of the users to Exchange 2000 Server, using Microsoft Exchange Mailbox Migration Wizard, while another performed the workstation upgrade.

BOSS’s U-Win application enabled the team to conduct the entire desktop upgrade remotely. First, U-Win backed up each user’s settings, preferences, and local “C” drive contents; then it formatted the hard disk and installed the new operating system and desktop software; finally, it restored the user’s individual settings and local data. Using the DiagWin inventory, a team member then verified that each user’s configuration was unchanged, and reinstalled any non-networked applications the user was running.

The team migrated 25–30 users at a time. The migration process for each group began on a Friday evening, and was completed on Sunday. When the users returned to work on Monday morning, they could barely notice that anything had changed. “They may have seen a few different icons, but they were able to pick right up where they left off, with all their email and settings intact,” says Miskovsky.

After BOSS had directed several of the migrations, Fisher & Phillips’s IT team was able to take over the process and manage the remainder themselves. “It was extremely easy to learn the process,” explains

“The stability of Microsoft Windows XP pays for itself.”

Jim Miskovsky, Director of Information Technology, Fisher & Phillips

Miskovsky. “BOSS’s tools made the migration very simple.”

In just five months, Fisher & Phillips completed the entire process of upgrading and standardizing its server and client infrastructure across 10 offices. “We were on an amazingly fast, aggressive schedule,” Miskovsky comments. “We were only able to do that because of BOSS’s tools.”

“Everything went beautifully,” he adds. “The migration went better than I ever dreamed it would.”

Benefits

In less than a year, Fisher & Phillips has found that its upgrade to Windows Server System, Windows XP, and Office XP has had a powerful, positive impact on the business performance of the firm. Some of the benefits it has seen include:

Enhanced Productivity

Fisher & Phillips report that it has increased efficiency in many areas as a result of the migration. For example, Miskovsky says that the upgrade to the Windows XP operating system has streamlined the firm’s desktop management significantly. “The stability of Microsoft Windows XP pays for itself,” he remarks.

With the migration, Fisher & Phillips also began using Microsoft Outlook® Web Access, which has made it much easier for staff to access their email remotely, further increasing its productivity.

Improved Quality of Work

Now that the firm has standardized on Office XP, everyone is using the same Word templates, which saves time and generates a consistent look and feel among all of the firm’s documents. “We now do a better job of meeting the expectations of our clients – which is what we strive for,” says Miskovsky.

Increased Collaboration

All offices now have a single repository for document sharing, in place of the separate

databases the company used previously. With this centralized document management, staff from every office can leverage all of the firm’s past work – by seeing what others have done, and accessing best practices. “Our attorneys can now get the information they need more quickly, and they have much broader resources at their fingertips,” Miskovsky explains.

Reduced IT Workloads

Having a unified environment with up-to-date Microsoft software has decreased the burden on Fisher & Phillips’s IT department significantly. “With a common platform, our help desk spends less time having to troubleshoot,” explains Miskovsky. “Updates are the same for everyone, which also streamlines our process significantly.”

“Active Directory has given us a lot more manageability in our 9 remote offices, which do not have their own technical support staff,” he adds. “We have a single tool to manage all of our users, and group policies are a lot easier to administer.” Miskovsky also notes that Active Directory has increased the security of Fisher & Phillips’s network, which is obviously paramount for a legal practice.

BOSS’s tools have also eased the firm’s IT workload. “With BOSS DiagWin, we now know what’s on every machine – and can check periodically in the future,” Miskovsky explains. “This makes life a lot easier for our IT department.” As part of the migration process, BOSS also installed a remote desktop tool on each workstation that allows support staff to view any user’s desktop at any networked location, and to troubleshoot remotely.

Miskovsky reports that because of the increased ease of administration, Fisher & Phillips have been able to reduce their IT costs. “While the firm has grown considerably, we have been able to keep our IT staff at the same level,” he explains.

For More Information

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For more information about BOSS solutions and services, call (678) 684-1200 or visit the Web site at: www.boss-solutions.com.

For more information about Fisher & Philips, call (404) 231-1400 or visit the Web site at: www.laborlawyers.com.

"We all think that the migration was worth the investment," Miskovsky concludes. "We can now deliver more consistent, faster service to our clients. We easily realized a return on investment within a year – plus many more intangible benefits."

Microsoft Windows Server System

Microsoft® Windows Server System™ is a comprehensive, integrated, and interoperable server infrastructure that helps reduce the complexity and costs of building, deploying, connecting, and operating agile business solutions. Windows Server System helps customers create new value for their business through the strategic use of their IT assets. With the Windows Server™ operating system as its foundation, Windows Server System delivers dependable infrastructure for data management and analysis; enterprise integration; customer, partner, and employee portals; business process automation; communications and collaboration; and core IT operations including security, deployment, and systems management. For more information about Windows Server System, go to: www.microsoft.com/windowsserversystem

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Software

- Microsoft Windows Server System
 - Microsoft Windows 2000 Advanced Server
 - Microsoft Active Directory
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2000
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2000 Enterprise
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional
- Microsoft Office XP Professional
- BOSS DiagWin Professional
- BOSS U-Win
- Imanage DeskSite 6.5

Hardware

- Dell Poweredge 2650 Servers

Partner

- Business Oriented Software Solutions, Inc. (BOSS)

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