



Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003 Customer Solution Case Study



Overview

Country or Region: Singapore
Industry: Scientific Equipment,
Laboratory and Process Analyzers

Customer Profile

Intermass Fischer Asia Pte Ltd is a distributor of scientific instrumentation and analyzers used by petroleum and petrochemical companies, with a reach throughout South East Asia and China.

Business Situation

Expand to new industries such as bioscience, pharmaceutical and electronic & semiconductors, and provide better branch access, data sharing, and improve operations.

Solution

Upgrade existing Windows NT Server to Windows Small Business Server 2003 R2 (SBS 2003 R2) with Exchange Server 2003

Benefits

- Resource sharing
- Secure email
- 50% increase in processes
- 20% less resources used
- Faster data and email backup



EPROM Data Systems Pte Ltd

Creating a Transparent IT System to Support Business Expansion

"SBS 2003 R2 enables secure collaboration with our overseas team. In the event of an incident like SARS, we will have minimal downtime and can continue to meet our customers' demands anywhere."

Cecilia Oon, Finance & Admin Manager, Intermass Fischer Asia

Intermass Fischer's instrumentation and analysers are used mainly by petrochemical companies, universities and commercial laboratories. The company also provides instruments to power plants and breweries, and has a customer base spread across the South East Asia and China regions. In 2007, the company planned to double its business profits and expand its reach to include new industries such as bioscience, pharmaceutical and electronic & semiconductor organizations. To facilitate this expansion strategy, Intermass needed to upgrade its IT infrastructure to improve data sharing and handle advanced functions such as business data storage and backup.

Eprom Data Systems Pte Ltd, a Microsoft SME IT Advisor upgraded Intermass' Windows NT Server to Windows Small Business Server 2003 R2 (SBS 2003 R2) with Exchange Server 2003 to improve data sharing among employees, regional branches, as well as partners and suppliers.



"This new system gives Inter-mass the capabilities to create sub-intranet websites for their offices in Singapore, Malaysia and China to store their shared documents, contact and schedules with full user access rights via the Internet."

Alvin Ang, Account Manager, Eprom Data Systems

Situation

Prior to the implementation of SBS 2003 R2, Inter-mass was running their business on Microsoft Windows NT Server V4.0 since 2001 – which served as the Domain Controller of the company's 20 plus PCs. However, these PCs were running on different versions of Windows. As a result, staff members were operating their own islands of data within the headquarters in Singapore as well as at the various branch offices across the region. In addition, an intermittent hardware/software issue with this server caused occasional downtime which affected their ability to keep operations running smoothly.

"We were unable able to get real time updates or access contacts, sales documents and other resources when we needed them," said Cecilia Oon, Inter-mass' Finance & Admin Manager. This slowed down operations and even impacted the company's profitability.

The problem was especially evident during the SARS outbreak in 2003, when the lack of remote corporate access brought the company operations to a standstill. "At that time, due to travel restrictions, we needed remote connectivity more than ever. However, the infrastructure was not prepared for this, and we had to revert to manual operations. Files were shared via email, but bigger files were couriered in CDs. We were unable to share vital information with staff who were at branch offices across Asia or with our suppliers. It became increasingly difficult to monitor remote staff movement. On top of that, it wasn't safe for our staff to travel to meet clients or supervise instrument installation and demonstrations," Oon added.

Solution

Realizing that the company couldn't afford anymore unexpected setbacks that would

greatly impact business revenue, Inter-mass consulted Eprom Data Systems Pte Ltd to help upgrade its IT system to reduce downtime and run business as usual even in times of crisis. As a Microsoft SME IT Advisor, Eprom implements suitable Microsoft solutions to meet customers' business needs.

"We helped analyze Inter-mass' IT needs and planned and deployed the SBS 2003 R2 which comes with Exchange Server 2003 as the foundation of their new IT infrastructure because it is a robust client/server network platform with central data storage capacity, effective data backup capabilities and provides maximum fault tolerance for data redundancy," said Alvin Ang, Account Manager, Eprom Data Systems.

"The solution not only fit into Inter-mass' IT budget, but also allowed the company to enjoy all the features that bigger enterprises enjoy, but at lower cost," Ang added. The SBS 2003 R2 is an advanced IT solution designed to help protect company data and has email and central data storage capabilities and File Transfer Service (FTP) – all in one affordable, integrated solution. The Exchange Server 2003 was an additional component that was bundled into the solution to backup and enable file and calendar sharing across the network.

The Microsoft server system took only one month to configure and deploy into Inter-mass' environment. "As the budget was tight, we decided not to reinvent the system. Instead we provided an email storage platform that co-existed with the current email hosting provider."

SBS 2003 R2 allowed secure remote access to network resources, for mobile staff, as well as staff at remote locations. Windows SharePoint Services was another highlight of the package. It enabled an intranet to be

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Intermass Fischer Asia

setup out of the box to allow sharing of sales & marketing materials, operation manuals, invoices and other important documents.

"This new system gives Intermass the capabilities to create sub-intranet websites for their offices in Singapore Malaysia and China respectively so that the individual office could store their shared documents, contacts and schedules with full user access rights via the Internet," said Ang.

Oon was especially impressed with the capabilities of Windows SharePoint Services. "This software makes the maintenance of the Intranet effortless. Even those without technical knowledge can easily edit the websites. It made the system more user friendly, uncomplicated, and important data could be easily accessed as and when we needed it," Oon added.

Benefits

Enabled resource sharing

Besides the introduction of the intranet, Microsoft Exchange has helped improve the ways staff work together. Prior to this, each staff was maintaining his or her individual contacts, tasks and schedules. SBS 2003 R2 made the sharing of important data easy, with the provision of a single workspace for teams to coordinate schedules, organize documents such as purchase orders, delivery orders and marketing digital files, and participate in discussions within the organization and over the extranet. "By staying connected and having easy access information, staff can now make more informed decisions and be more productive," said Oon.

SharePoint also alerts users on actions that are required or when changes are made to important documentations, to enable staff to respond to alerts. Sophisticated surveys and discussions boards are now generated, so that collated data can be compiled into

intelligent business research documents that can be shared by all for greater success.

Reliable, secure data management

With email data storage and FTP, important data can be backed up in one place, effortlessly and easily. "The process is transparent. There is no downtime or system slowdown when data is being backed up every 30 minutes, because the system is stable and very reliable. Plus, we don't need to change storage backup tapes, as we had to in the old days." said Oon.

Users also get more control over documents they author, as Windows SharePoint has enhanced features that include the option to require document checkout before editing, the ability to view revisions and restore previous versions, and the ability to set document-specific security.

Cost and manpower savings

Prior to the installation of this new IT system, a lot of tasks were done manually. When new staff came on board, emails took time to set up. Installing new programs and updating the different work stations also had to be done manually. "The SBS 2003 R2 has helped speed up this process by 50% with an installer wizard that helps with setups. We no longer have to backup our emails, as the system does it for us automatically. It makes life so much easier for my team," said Oon. The same task that took a few people to complete now only takes one person – the system administrator. Oon added, "We've managed to cut down human resources by 20%."

Improved performance, reduced downtime
Data storage and backup also means should security problems arise reinstallation can be executed so much faster and easier, with minimum downtime.

For More Information

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Now that the right data is accessible to the right people as and when they need it, Intermass is looking into better ways to manage resources for sales and services personal to generate sales and financial reports and improve the methods and speed of responding to customer needs and managing customer relationships. "We have our eyes set on Microsoft's CRM to achieve this goal," concluded Oon.

Windows Small Business Server 2003

Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003 is a powerful advantage for your business success. Improve the security of your data and help your network run dependably. Release new productivity from your desktops while empowering your employees to do more. And connect to your customers like never before.

For more information about Windows Small Business Server 2003, please visit: www.microsoft.com/sbs

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 R2 with Microsoft Exchange Server component

- Technologies
 - Microsoft SharePoint Team Services