



Microsoft Small Business Server 2008 Customer Solution Case Study



Training consultancy boosts productivity with all-in-one solution

Overview

Country or Region: Singapore
Industry: Training and consultancy

Customer profile

SSA Consulting Group is a consulting and training services company which helps enterprises to develop and implement innovative business and management strategies to achieve sustained shareholder value growth.

Solution

SSA deployed Microsoft Small Business Server 2008, which provides it with enhanced collaboration and communication capabilities, as well as support for remote and mobile workers. The platform also allows SSA to simplify the administration of its core infrastructure.

Benefits

- Simplified infrastructure management
- 30 per cent boost in productivity
- Improved collaboration
- Enhanced security
- Up to 90 per cent time and cost savings

“The management of the infrastructure was greatly simplified because the system allows administrators to find out the overall health of the network and PC at one glance.”

Mr Affandi Salleh, Chief Operating Officer of the SSA Consulting Group

The SSA Consulting Group provides a wide spectrum of business consulting and training services. In March 2009, due to rapid business growth, it decided to streamline its operations with the implementation of a customised Training Management System.

However, SSA's existing hardware and software infrastructure was unable to support the new application, and intermittent systems failure would affect the smooth running of the company's operations.

To address this, SSA decided to upgrade to Microsoft Small Business Server 2008 (SBS 2008), taking advantage of the seamless server migration path available from its existing SBS 2003.





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Mr Affandi Salleh, Chief Operating Officer, SSA Consulting Group.

Situation

The SSA Consulting Group provides a wide spectrum of consulting and training services aimed at helping enterprises to develop and implement innovative business and management strategies to achieve sustained shareholder value growth.

Established in 1984, the Group has a team of over 20 experienced industry professionals with in-depth expertise in domains such as retailing, manufacturing, oil and gas, construction, transportation, education, media and entertainment, finance, hospitality, IT, publishing and trading.

Due to the rapid growth in its training and consulting services, SSA decided to further streamline its operations in March 2009 with the implementation of a customised Training Management System which would enable it to track and organise its training programmes for clients.

“The system would enable us to grow our business by providing faster and more accurate responses to customers while minimising mistakes,” said Mr Affandi Salleh, Chief Operating Officer of the SSA Consulting Group.

For example, it would help SSA to maintain accurate client database records, training and certification details, cost centre and billing information and attendance records, while also retaining relevant data for audit tracing.

However, there was one hitch - SSA’s old IT infrastructure was unable to support the new training software. The Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 (SBS 2003), which served as the File Server, was running on an aging Dell platform and intermittent hardware or software failure would cause the occasional downtime, affecting the smooth running of the company’s operations.

Solution

To address these issues, Microsoft’s telesales team referred SSA to EPROM Data Systems. As a Microsoft Small and Medium Enterprise Advisor, EPROM provided SSA with full project planning, management and implementation services, and made recommendations for the hardware and software components that SSA would require. Amongst their proposals was an upgrade to SBS 2008.

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with an all-in-one, affordable, integrated solution. For example, we could make use of the calendaring services that came with Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, which was one of the components of SBS 2008," said Mr Affandi.

SBS 2008 would provide SSA with enhanced collaboration and communication capabilities.

For example, Windows SharePoint Services 3.0 would enable the company to set up an Intranet for collaboration amongst team members. SBS 2008 also supported remote employees through its Remote Web Workplace, which gave workers access to email, files and the Intranet. Mobile workers could also access many of these applications via their Windows Mobile phone.

Another factor that convinced SSA to upgrade to SBS 2008 was the simplified administration of the core server infrastructure. There were easy-to-read "green check" reports which gave users a quick view of the status of Microsoft software updates, PCs and servers, antivirus and backup. This would help minimise downtime and help ensure network health.

Once the decision was finalised, EPROM proceeded with the data migration. It also upgraded the network cabling system and provided site-to-site virtual private network connectivity to link up SSA's training centres across the island, enabling them to access the new Training Management System in a secure manner.

Benefits

The move to SBS 2008 has resulted in significant benefits for SSA on the business and technical front.

Simplified infrastructure management

Downtime has been eliminated with the improved infrastructure management capabilities of SBS 2008. "The management of the infrastructure was greatly simplified because the system allows administrators to find out the overall health of the network and PC at one glance. It also provides the administrator with comprehensive network management reports," said Mr Affandi.

30 per cent boost in productivity

Overall productivity of SSA's staff increased by about 30 per cent, thanks to remote and mobile access to emails, real-time calendaring and task management.

"The management team can now synchronise their emails, contacts, calendars and tasks via their PDA phones while on the move, and also access their emails via the feature-rich Outlook Web Access. This ensures that meetings are not missed," said Mr Affandi.

Improved collaboration

Teamwork has also been given a boost with the Self Management Portal and Remote Web Workplace which allow members to update the SharePoint site with the latest version of documents such as training manuals and client proposals. Employees are also able to remotely access the files on the shared drive, allowing them greater flexibility in working from home.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, go to: www.microsoft.com/singapore

For more information about EPROM Data Systems, call +65-6339 9792 or visit the Web site at: www.eprom.com.sg

For more information about SSA Consulting Group, call +65-68422282 or visit the Web site at: www.ssagroup.com

Enhanced security

The Active Directory Services helps SSA to ensure data security by allowing the system administrator to centrally managing users, accounts, servers, and group policies.

Up to 90 per cent time and cost savings

With the robustness of the SBS 2008 platform, SSA has managed to save up to 90 per cent of its IT manpower costs because there is no longer a need to investigate intermittent hardware or software issues that used to plague the old infrastructure.

Server administrators can also reduce the time needed for infrastructure management by up to 90 per cent because the system now generates a detailed Network Report that can be emailed to them on a daily or weekly basis. Parameters such as security logs, updates, backup status, email usage, mailbox sizes and server event logs are captured on this report.

Software

- Microsoft Office Standard Edition
- Windows Small Business Server Standard 2008
 - Windows Server 2008
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2007
 - Windows SharePoint Services 3.0
 - Microsoft Office Live Small Business
 - Microsoft Forefront Security for Exchange Server
 - Windows Server Update Services 3.0
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2008

Hardware

- IBM x3650

Services

- Full project planning, management and implementation services