



Overview

Country: United States
Industry: Manufacturing

Customer Profile

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, S&C Electric Company provides equipment and services for electric power systems. The privately held company operates nine facilities around the world and has more than 2,000 employees.

Business Situation

S&C wanted to improve the productivity of its mobile workers, enabling them to respond to e-mail and voice-mail messages faster.

Solution

To take advantage of the latest messaging technologies, the manufacturer deployed a prerelease version of Microsoft Exchange Server 2007.

Benefits

- Improved mobile productivity
- Increased operational efficiency for IT
- Better Web mail experience
- Opportunity to reduce costs



Manufacturer Improves Productivity for Mobile Workers with Messaging System Upgrade

“The unified messaging solutions from telecommunications companies came with a cost. But Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 provides built-in support for unified messaging at no additional cost.”

Bill Klosa, Lead Network Analyst, S&C Electric

S&C Electric Company provides equipment and services to help utilities and large-scale manufacturers deliver electric power efficiently. The company operates nine facilities on three continents, so employees depend on e-mail and voice mail to stay connected to customers around the world, and to headquarters in Chicago, Illinois. To take advantage of next-generation messaging technologies, S&C recently installed the beta version of Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007. Now employees can access e-mail, voice mail, and faxes through a single mailbox, enabling them to respond to messages in minutes, not hours. By automating routine IT tasks with the new software, S&C will gain operational efficiency. And with its new foundation for unified messaging, the company may eliminate its current voice-mail system, making it possible to reduce future costs.

“The ability to access e-mail and voice mail through my Windows Mobile-based smartphone is a huge timesaver.”

Cathy Anderson, Business Systems Analyst,
S&C Electric Company

Situation

Privately held S&C Electric Company is a specialist in electric power switching and protection. The switches, fuses, and other products that S&C designs and manufactures help global utility companies and large-scale manufacturers transmit electric power efficiently and reliably. And the service offerings that it provides assist customers in system planning. Founded in 1911, S&C has 2,000 employees and operates nine facilities around the world, including corporate headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, and sites in Brazil, Canada, China, and Mexico.

S&C has been a Microsoft customer since 1992. Its technology infrastructure includes 120 server computers, along with Microsoft® SQL Server™ 2005, BizTalk® Server 2004, Operations Manager 2005, Systems Management Server 2003, and Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2004.

At the heart of the S&C environment are five Dell PowerEdge server computers running Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 on the Windows Server® 2003 Enterprise Edition operating system. About 1,500 desktop computers, including Dell OptiPlex and Dell Precision Workstations, run Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003 on the Windows® XP Professional SP2 operating system. More than 100 sales and IT professionals rely on Windows Mobile® powered smartphones and BlackBerry wireless devices to access e-mail when they are away from their desks. In addition, S&C depends on Microsoft Exchange Hosted Services for e-mail queuing, virus protection, and filtering of unsolicited e-mail.

The ability to respond quickly to voice mail and e-mail is critically important to S&C. Its sales force conducts business around the world. And employees who work at the company's Chicago headquarters are dispersed across 21 buildings that span about 46 acres.

Consider Cathy Anderson, Business Systems Analyst at S&C, for example. Requests for support come in via e-mail and phone, she says, but “I’m not always at my desk. As a support person, I could be anywhere.” The BlackBerry wireless device she carried did not allow her to access messages that she received in the company's voice-mail system. “One of the complaints I got was that it often took me three hours to return a phone call,” she says.

Working at home also posed challenges to staying connected. “During the day, I’d have to call in constantly to check for messages on the company's voice-mail system,” says Steve Neel, Web Software Developer at S&C. In addition, the company's voice-mail system didn't allow him to forward messages to partners outside that voice-mail system. Carrying out business away from their desktops also made it difficult for S&C employees to schedule appointments and look up phone numbers and e-mail addresses for contacts.

S&C sought a cost-effective solution that would allow 1,500 employees to manage voice-mail and e-mail messages more efficiently. And, while the company was satisfied with Exchange Server 2003, it was also eager to take advantage of next-generation messaging technology. S&C is a technology-driven company, according to Bill Klosa, Lead Network Analyst at S&C. “We like to move to the latest versions as soon as they are ready,” he says.

Solution

In spring 2006, Klosa learned about the planned release of Exchange Server 2007. Soon after, S&C Electric Company decided to participate in the Microsoft Rapid Deployment Program (RDP) to provide real-world feedback on a prerelease version of the new software.

Klosa realized that Exchange Server 2007 could help S&C achieve its long-term goal of providing unified messaging support to 1,500 employees, enabling them to access e-mail, voice mail, and fax messages from a single mailbox. In addition, installing the prerelease version of the new software would fulfill the company's commitment to evaluating new technologies as soon as they are available.

S&C considered alternative unified messaging solutions, says Klosa. But they did not offer the opportunity for future cost savings. "The unified messaging solutions from telecommunications companies came with a cost. But Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 provides built-in support for unified messaging at no additional cost," he says.

Rapid Deployment

In August 2006, as part of RDP, Microsoft provided the services of Project Leadership Associates, a Chicago, Illinois-based IT consulting firm and Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, to help S&C install the new software quickly. "The opportunity to prepare for the new version of Microsoft Exchange Server was a key reason that we chose to participate in the RDP program," says Klosa.

In late August, S&C deployed the prerelease version of Exchange Server 2007 on a Dell PowerEdge 2850 server computer running Windows Server 2003 Enterprise x64 Edition. "The installation proceeded smoothly," says Don Penland, Solution Group Leader for Communication and Collaboration at Project Leadership Associates, who worked closely with Klosa. "The setup process for Exchange Server 2007 is wizard based, and it's very straightforward."

Klosa notes that, while there were some issues regarding interoperability between the new and old versions of the software, Exchange Server 2007 makes it easy to resolve those issues. "It asks questions and,

based on the answers, recommends the next steps," he says.

As part of the Exchange Server 2007 installation, the company deployed Microsoft Office Outlook® Web Access, as well as Exchange Server ActiveSync® technology.

Automation of Routine Setup Tasks

A key factor in easing administration is the new Exchange Management Shell with its command-line interface, says Penland. Customers can automate routine tasks such as adding and deleting user mailboxes, and the new software allows them to make changes and easily apply them across the environment. "In previous versions, automating similar tasks would take many lines of code," says Penland. "But the Exchange Management Shell can perform those same tasks with a single line of code. That provides customers with powerful options for administration."

In early September 2006, S&C engaged Bloomington, Minnesota-based Avtex, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, to take advantage of the service provider's expertise in unified messaging. "With Exchange Server 2007 Unified Messaging, we found the integration with the S&C legacy environment to be pretty straightforward and painless," says Tim Bakke, Product Manager for Enterprise Messaging and Collaboration at Avtex.

Bakke worked with S&C to integrate Exchange Server 2007 with the company's existing Avaya Definity G3 phone switch and enable user mailboxes, specifying a personal identification number (PIN) and extension for each. "The setup process for unified messaging in Exchange Server 2007 is very simple," says Anderson. "I dialed the extension and entered the PIN, and from there I mostly talked my way through it. I changed my PIN, went into my voice mail, and called people within only a few minutes."

“Each version of Microsoft Exchange Server gets easier and easier to set up.”

Bill Klosa, Lead Network Analyst,
S&C Electric Company

All the mobile users who have been converted to Exchange Server 2007 are using mobile phones, including smartphones running Windows Mobile 5.0 software.

Benefits

Judging from the success of its initial deployment of Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, S&C Electric Company expects both users and IT administrators to realize significant productivity savings from the upgraded messaging system. Accessing e-mail and voice mail through a single device will enable users to respond to messages faster and collaborate with colleagues and customers more easily. And because Exchange Server 2007 uses scripts for many tasks that previously required manual coding, IT administrators at S&C gain operational efficiencies.

Improved Mobile Productivity

Mobile employees at S&C now get more done faster, thanks to Exchange Server 2007.

“The ability to access e-mail and voice mail through my Windows Mobile-based smartphone is a huge timesaver,” says Anderson, who spends much of her day out and about on the company’s 46-acre headquarters campus.

In the past, Anderson carried a BlackBerry wireless device, which did not allow her to access her voice-mail messages. She had to walk back to her desk to check her voice mail and then head out again, often to the other end of the campus. But because Exchange Server 2007 has built-in support for unified messaging, going back and forth is no longer necessary. Now Anderson can respond to messages in minutes, instead of hours. She also appreciates the ability to reply to e-mail verbally, instead of typing a response at the keyboard. “You can reply by just talking into your phone,” she says.

Another productivity booster for S&C users is the ability to access contact information over

the phone when they are away from their desks. “Getting contact information via voice is helpful,” says Dave Burman, Web Designer at S&C. “There are a lot of times when I am away from the office and I need a telephone number. I can access both my personal contacts and the S&C company directory right over the phone with Outlook Voice Access.”

Unified messaging not only allows users to “listen” to e-mail messages from their mobile phones, but it also lets them “read” voice-mail messages via e-mail. “Getting voice-mail messages via e-mail is useful because it lets me forward messages to e-mail contacts,” says John Crain, Vice President of Information Technology at S&C. Traditional voice-mail systems are more limited, he notes: “They don’t allow users to forward messages to colleagues outside the voice-mail system.”

Increased Operational Efficiency for IT

As S&C moves beyond its initial deployment of Exchange Server 2007, the company expects to benefit from the timesavings associated with automating routine IT tasks. The new Exchange Management Shell, built on Windows PowerShell technology, provides a command-line interface and scripting language for administrators. With those tools, administrators can automate previously manual tasks such as connecting clients to servers. “Each version of Microsoft Exchange Server gets easier and easier to set up,” says Klosa, who is looking forward to the future timesavings associated with the new software.

Better Web Mail Experience

With the latest version of Outlook Web Access, S&C employees working remotely have the ability to gain secure access to large files stored on internal server computers, without having to connect over a virtual private network. “It’s going to be really valuable for everybody,” says Furlong. “In the past, to provide access to a 100-megabyte

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presentation, for example, we had to put it on an external server and give the user an FTP account to get to it. But now all we have to do is provide a link over e-mail.”

Opportunity to Reduce Costs

As S&C moves forward with its deployment of Exchange Server 2007, the company will be able to reduce costs by eliminating its current voice-mail system. “We will be able to replace an older piece of proprietary hardware with an ordinary 64-bit server computer,” says Klosa.

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to: www.microsoft.com/servers/default.mspx

For more information about Microsoft Exchange Server, go to: www.microsoft.com/exchange

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Windows Server 2003 Enterprise x64 Edition
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2007
- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003
 - Microsoft Office Outlook 2007
- Technologies
 - ActiveSync
 - Microsoft Office Outlook Web Access

Hardware

- Dell PowerEdge server computers

Partners

- Avtex
- Project Leadership Associates



Communication and Collaboration Solutions

Project Leadership Associates has worked with several customers to envision, plan and deploy the technologies that encompass the Microsoft Unified Communication solutions including Microsoft Exchange Server, Office Communications Server and the Windows Mobile platform. These solutions can have a direct impact on the productivity of an organization's employees, allowing them to collaborate more effectively from any device and from anywhere in the world. Increased productivity has resulted in a communication and collaboration platform that has a direct impact on revenue and customer satisfaction by allowing employees to find, collaborate and share information with the right people.

Project Leadership Associates is offering a **FREE one on one briefing** to outline the solutions that encompass Microsoft Unified Communications. These solutions include Microsoft Exchange 2007 with Unified Messaging and Office Communications Server.

To take advantage of this free offer contact Don Penland at dpenland@projectleadership.net or phone (312) 441-1953

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