



Stockbroker Avoids Increasing IT Costs Through Total Technology Refresh

Overview

Country: United Kingdom

Industry: Financial Services

Customer Profile

Charles Stanley Stockbrokers, a member of the London Stock Exchange since 1852, is one of the UK's largest independently owned full service stockbrokers. Its network of 24 branch offices extends throughout the UK.

Business Situation

Charles Stanley Stockbrokers needed to migrate from Microsoft® Windows NT® Server 4.0 and Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5 to upgrade its technology in line with the rapid growth in its business.

Solution

Business Systems Group recommended a complete technology refresh using Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 with Active Directory® and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 with Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003.

Benefits

- Increased operational efficiency
- Low total cost of ownership
- Automated solution aids compliance
- Easier remote working for managers
- Secure by design and deployment

“We are getting much more for less. The major advantage is that Windows Server 2003 has saved me having to employ more people because it has features such as the instant online snapshot and backup of databases and storage groups.”

Mark Smith, IT Manager, Charles Stanley Stockbrokers

Charles Stanley Stockbrokers, the leading UK stockbroker, decided to take advantage of an upgrade of its operating system and email server to undergo a complete technology refresh. The firm has grown from five to 24 branches since 1997 with a corresponding need for investment in technology to maintain market share and ensure easier compliance with regulators. Business Systems Group (BSG), a Microsoft® Gold Partner for Enterprise Solutions, recommended replacing Microsoft Windows NT® Server 4.0 and Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5 with Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003, Active Directory® and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003. IT administrators are now more productive because Exchange Server 2003 and Windows Server 2003 are designed to work together helping financial services firms to reduce total cost of ownership for messaging and collaboration. The increased automation of business processes has resulted in Charles Stanley Stockbrokers avoiding the need to employ more people to handle database management and email archiving.



Situation

Charles Stanley Stockbrokers is one of the UK's largest independently owned, full service stockbrokers. As a member of the London Stock Exchange since 1852, it is one of the longest established UK brokers. Its network of branch offices extends throughout the UK and the firm is proud of the high quality discretionary and advisory portfolio management services offered to its customers.

Like any firm with a long tradition of customer service, Charles Stanley Stockbrokers is protective of its reputation. During the past seven years, the firm has grown from five to 24 branches with a corresponding need for investment in technology to maintain market share and ensure easier compliance with regulators.

Mark Smith, IT Manager, Charles Stanley Stockbrokers, says: "Seven years ago we didn't even have a network and we were still very reliant on paper-based and manual systems. With the growth of the firm, our needs have changed. Automated solutions such as email archiving, are no longer a nice to have but essential for our business."

Charles Stanley Stockbrokers has the benefit of a long-term relationship with Business Systems Group (BSG), a Microsoft® Gold Partner for Enterprise Solutions, which has helped the firm since 1996 design, deploy, and operate its technology. Charles Stanley Stockbrokers was using Microsoft Windows NT® Server operating system 4.0 for its operating system with Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5 for email. Last year it began reviewing its options and budget for upgrading its technology, improving operational efficiencies and providing better tools for its staff.

Smith says: "We were planning to upgrade for all our branches to Microsoft Windows®

2000 Server with an update to Active Directory® to save on our budget. Then BSG invited me to a free workshop they run every few months explaining the extra functionality of Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003, which includes Active Directory."

Solution

On the back of the workshop about Windows Server 2003 operating system, BSG conducted white board sessions with Charles Stanley Stockbrokers to drive the Active Directory service design and then acted in a mentoring role for the stockbroker's IT staff in the Windows NT migration. Craig Rose, Technical Architect, BSG, says: "The upgrade of server infrastructure to Windows Server 2003 with Active Directory deployment from Windows NT was an ideal opportunity to review and refresh all their technology. Charles Stanley Stockbrokers really responded to our advice."

Having made the decision to upgrade, Charles Stanley Stockbrokers naturally wanted rapid time to market. Smith says: "Most of the scoping was done in December 2003. We migrated to Active Directory and Microsoft Exchange 2003 over Christmas and completed the project in May."

By moving to Microsoft Exchange 2003 and Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 messaging and collaboration client, Charles Stanley Stockbrokers gained much greater flexibility for its key staff including the potential for some executives to work from home or from remote locations. Using ExchangeServer ActiveSync® technology, Exchange Server 2003 provides always up-to-date over-the-air synchronisation of email, calendar, contacts and other corporate data. Exchange Server 2003 offers mobile professionals a convenient and manageable way to be connected and productive while on the move.

Charles Stanley Stockbrokers also implemented a storage area network (SAN) and a new email archiving solution so as to more easily comply with the legal requirement from the Financial Services Authority to keep unstructured content for six years. The email archiving solution from KVS is an add on to Exchange Server 2003. It offers a highly scalable and customisable approach to address lifecycle management requirements for email and unstructured content generated by the firm.

Operational efficiency was another key measure of the solution. By using Exchange Server 2003 Charles Stanley Stockbrokers is managing attachments to email more effectively, because multiple copies are no longer transmitted through the network. Smith says: "Attachments take up typically 70 per cent of storage, but we have eliminated the problem of multiple copies by only keeping one."

Active Directory and the Lightweight Directory Access Protocol Intranet have also enabled four directory databases to be integrated into one if the Intranet is included.

Benefits

Improve Operational Efficiency

Operational efficiency has improved at Charles Stanley Stockbrokers with the implementation of Windows Server 2003 and Exchange Server 2003. With 700 users to manage on 24 different sites, IT administrators are saving time and increasing productivity because Exchange Server 2003 and Windows Server 2003 are designed to work together helping financial services firms to reduce total cost of ownership for messaging and collaboration.

Rose says: "Active Directory performance enhancements in Windows Server 2003 help you install Exchange Server 2003. Charles

Stanley Stockbrokers was running a combined Windows NT 4.0 and Exchange Server 5.5 environment. The Windows Active Directory Migration Tool (ADMT), enhanced for Windows Server 2003, enables you to move to Active Directory quickly and easily with a minimum of disruption and fuss. ADMT helps you by copying passwords and is fully scriptable."

Lower Total Cost of Ownership

Charles Stanley Stockbrokers is achieving cost savings and a lower total cost of ownership following the successful migration to Windows Server 2003. Smith says: "We are getting much more for less. The major advantage is that Windows Server 2003 has saved me having to employ more people because it has features such as the instant online snapshot and backup of databases and storage groups."

The stockbroker has also found that Exchange Server 2003 offers better server consolidation. The increased performance between Outlook clients and Exchange Server 2003 increases productivity and enables firms to implement mailbox server consolidation schemes.

Easier Remote Working for Key Managers

Exchange Server 2003 together with Outlook 2003 offer a much richer feature set and are making it easier for Charles Stanley Stockbrokers' small but important group of remote workers. Smith says: "For 20 or so of our staff mainly in corporate finance and IT this is a distinct advantage, but most of our people are office based working fixed hours."

Staff generally have benefited because Exchange Server 2003 and Outlook 2003 work together to deliver consistently efficient access to personal business information independent of network characteristics. Smith says: "Outlook 2003 is a powerful

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For more information about Business Systems Group products and services, visit the Web site at: www.bsg.co.uk

For more information about Charles Stanley Stockbrokers products and services, visit the Web site at: www.charles-stanley.co.uk

communication and scheduling program and to ensure that we get the most out of it BSG is spending six weeks with us training our staff in the new functionality of the system.”

Supports Improved Security

Exchange Server 2003 and Windows Server 2003 are secure by design and secure in deployment, upholding the tenets of the Microsoft Trustworthy Computing initiative. Among the new features are S/MIME support and automatic logoff after inactivity in Outlook Web access. Smith says: “Windows 2003 Server actively supports biometric devices for passwords [security devices relying on biological data] and we are looking at that. It isn’t something we could have done before.”

Microsoft Windows Server System

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For more information about Windows Server System, go to: www.microsoft.com/windowsserversystem

Software and Services

■ Products

- Microsoft Office Outlook 2003
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2003

- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Standard Edition

■ Technologies

- Microsoft Active Directory

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