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Accenture

Accenture Makes Strategic Choice for Integrated Messaging and Collaboration

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Accenture, a worldwide management consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company, was one of the first companies to implement an enterprise-scale messaging and collaboration technology platform. As the company advanced, it saw the need for a more efficient and cost-effective way to collaborate. After evaluating its current and future needs, Accenture decided to embrace the messaging and collaboration capabilities of the Microsoft® line of server software. The company worked with Microsoft and Avanade, a global technology integrator that specializes in Microsoft technology solutions, to transition from Lotus Domino and Notes to Microsoft Exchange 2000 Server and Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003. Migrating to the Microsoft technologies enabled Accenture to reduce operating costs, improve collaboration, and provide flexibility for its global work force.

Situation

One of the first large-scale customers to implement Lotus Notes, Accenture has grown from a management and technology consulting business into a company that also offers a broader array of business, technology, and outsourcing services. As the business grew and evolved, it needed to move to a technology platform that would further enable communication and collaboration, both internally and with its client and partner community.

"We are committed to providing a single, integrated desktop application suite, enabling increased productivity of our people and giving them greater capability to collaborate and communicate with clients and other companies," says Accenture's Chief Information Officer, Frank Modruson.

With more than 129,000 employees in 48 countries, Accenture needed a solution that

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Solution Overview

Organization Profile

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company with more than 129,000 people in 48 countries and annual revenues of U.S.\$15 billion in 2005.

Business Situation

As the business evolved, it needed to move to a technology platform that would enable communication and collaboration, both internally and with its client and partner community.

Solution

Accenture made a strategic decision to transition to a Microsoft®-based solution for messaging and collaboration.

Benefits

- Better mobile user experience

Microsoft Case Studies: Accenture countries, Accenture needed a solution that provided flexible options for mobile workers. Accenture employees often work remotely—from client locations, hotels, airplanes, and home—and across a variety of platforms and bandwidths. Over 30 percent of Accenture employees spend more than three-fourths of their time outside the office. On any given day, 10 percent of those employees—around 4,000 people—work in a country other than their own, not just out of the office but in an entirely different IT context. “Our employees need ‘anytime, anywhere’ access for all IT products and services,” Modruson says.

Solution

Accenture evaluated a number of communication and collaboration solutions. After carefully considering different options, Accenture decided to migrate to a messaging and collaboration solution based on Microsoft® Exchange 2000 Server, the Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 messaging and collaboration client, and Windows® SharePoint® Services. The solution runs on the Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system, the foundation of Microsoft’s line of server software. Accenture worked with Microsoft and Avanade, a Microsoft Certified Partner, to complete the migration.

Benefits

Migrating to the Microsoft solution enabled Accenture to reduce total cost of ownership (TCO), improve collaboration, and provide flexibility for its global work force.

Lower Total Cost of Ownership

According to Modruson, Outlook 2003 and Exchange 2000 Server are less expensive to operate than the previous environment, and thus are contributing to a lower total cost of ownership. “With Exchange [Server] and the Windows platform, we’ve realized a 25 percent reduction of Accenture’s overall e-mail, messaging, and knowledge management application costs in three years,” Modruson says.

As part of the migration, Accenture completed a massive server site and collaboration database consolidation, which yielded significant operational savings. The company reduced the number of sites that support messaging servers from more than 40 to 4, and reduced the number of mail servers from more than 250 to 120.

Improved Collaboration

With the switch to Exchange Server, Accenture has dramatically improved the ease and quality of communication within the company and between Accenture and its clients, strategic

- Smooth, low-impact migration
- 25 percent reduction in e-mail, messaging, and knowledge sharing application operating costs

Partner(s)

Avanade

Software and Services

Microsoft Exchange 2000 Server
Microsoft Office Outlook 2003
Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services

Vertical Industries

Management Consulting

Country/Region

United States



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partners, and suppliers. "Because Outlook uses HTML, we can have richer communication with our clients and partners," according to Vid Byanna, Global Infrastructure Executive Director for Accenture. "We're using a standards-based content format within our e-mail that can be received and read by virtually any mail system."

With Windows SharePoint Services, Accenture created a central Web location where employees can share project information, documents, contacts, and tasks. "We wanted to avoid the need for our users to create legacy databases by offering a new collaboration option," says Byanna. "With 15,000 collaboration databases, we had a lot of content, and our goal was to minimize our costs by not having to do a lot of content conversion."

Windows SharePoint Services allows for self-provisioning, which means that users can create and post sites and content without IT intervention. Byanna says employees are taking advantage of SharePoint sites for a variety of purposes including project team collaboration, surveys, and document repositories. By cutting the support needs for collaboration, the use of SharePoint sites has lowered IT costs and freed up IT resources for other essential tasks.

Enhanced Mobility

Modruson and Byanna see many benefits for Accenture workers due to Microsoft software integration. "E-mail access for many of our mobile employees and outsourcing workforce located at client locations is browser-based, and there's a clear win with the Exchange [Server] and Internet Explorer experience," Byanna says. "The user interfaces in Outlook and Internet Explorer are similar, [so] our users don't have to learn a different interface."

Accenture also finds it easy to integrate messaging with a variety of non-PC devices. "For a highly mobile work force like ours, with people who relocate for long periods of time, Exchange [Server] allows us to provide better service in a more seamless way," says Modruson.

Byanna adds, "There are many capabilities that Microsoft has today, or will be offering in future releases, that make mobility easier for us. For example, Microsoft is doing a lot with real-time collaboration and instant messaging, and integrating instant messaging with the rest of its software."

Ease of Deployment

Accenture's migration to the Microsoft solution has been very smooth. During the e-mail

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migration, for example, the company was able to move up to 1,000 users per day. "The migration went extremely well," says Byanna. "It was done at an incredible pace." Avanade staged the transition to Exchange 2000 Server, designing processes and systems with end-users in mind. To ensure 100 percent delivery of messages between the old mail system and the new Exchange Server mail infrastructure, Avanade implemented and tested an e-mail re-routing architecture that bridged the two systems during the transition period.

Plans for the Future

The combined strength of Accenture, Avanade, and Microsoft resulted in a lower-cost, highly effective solution for collaboration and communication. Accenture plans to continue working with these partners for future success. "If you look at Exchange [Server] 2003 and Outlook 2003, there is a lot more integrated functionality that we'll be able to leverage," says Byanna. "The key for us is that it is all built into the software."

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